

WALKING In LOVE



A. B. SIMPSON

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IN
LOVE



A. B. Simpson

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The Preeminence of Love

“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” 1 Cor. 13:13.

Our old English version has called love, charity. But the modern sense of that word has narrowed the glorious conception in the mind of the Holy Ghost when He wrote this sublime chapter. The heavenly charity means a great deal more than almsgiving, benevolence and sentimental love. The root of the word is the same as grace; it means that love which comes from heaven and is breathed into the heart by the Holy Ghost. It is not the love of human passion, but the grace of God and the nature of Christ. It is love as a gift and as an inwrought grace of the Holy Ghost. It is the queen of all the graces, to which even faith and hope must bow and before which they shall fade away in the glory of eternal love. Why is love the greatest of these?

I. Love is the greatest thing in human life and history. What is the charm of poetry and romance? What

has lighted up the pages of literature in every age, and ever been the inspiration of the loftiest human genius? It has been the trials and the triumphs of human friendship and affection, the selfish sentiments often of unholy love. What is the meaning of patriotism? What has been the incentive that has carried millions of lives to the heroisms of the battlefield and made them count it a pride and joy to die for liberty and native land? It has been the love of country. What is the meaning of home, the dearest thing in human life? It is the embodiment of love; it is the place where all the holiest ties of life meet. Take away love from home, and it will pass out of existence, and life will become a dreary drudgery and a blank despair. So that literature, patriotism and home, perhaps the three greatest things in human life apart from God, are all expressions of love.

God has strangely placed in the hearts of men the ties and instincts of affection which bind them together in the social system and which keep this great world moving in order and harmony, at the bidding of affections which men are called to obey, and without which human society would be a curse and a wreck. The world values love above all else. Many a man would give all he possesses for the love which he cannot buy; many a mother would be glad to be penniless to hold back from death the child that is more to her than life; many a woman is toiling and suffering amid hardships that no price could induce her to undergo, but counting it a luxury of joy for the man she loves and to whom she has given all her life. Oh! if the poor counterfeit, or, at least, the perverted and imperfect form which has been left to lost humanity as a wreck of love is so precious, what must the divine reality be?

II. Love is the greatest thing in God. It is the only thing which is said in the Scriptures to be the nature or essence of God. God is righteous, holy, wise

and mighty; but God is not holiness, wisdom and power (i.e., these attributes do not constitute His essence); but God is love. If you were to look at an embodiment of justice, it would not be God; it would only be one side of the mountain, precipitous and majestic, but terrible. But could you behold perfect love embodied, you would have God in all His fullness.

The predominant element in God is not righteousness, but love. Everything He has and does is dominated, controlled and colored by love. He is just, because He is love, and because injustice would be an injury and wrong to the creation; and where He can be just and also merciful, mercy rejoices against judgment.

As we look out upon the material universe, His goodness and kindness shine on every side and color every aspect of creation. And as we look at His holy Word and the marvelous story of redemption, while it exhibits His holiness most marvelously, the picture of His love exceeds all else, and we are compelled to see wherein is love—not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. And as we look at the story of each individual life and especially the lives of His children, we shall find that God has been as kind as it was possible for Him to be in every case, that He has done the very best possible for every human being, and that even those, who at last perish through their unbelief, are the objects of His tenderest compassion, perish against His will, and receive even in their ruin the tears of His tenderness and sorrow and the parting words of pathos, “How often would I have gathered (you) together . . . and ye would not.”

III. Love is the greatest thing in the holy life and character; it is the sum of all duty and the summary of all law. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,”

and "thy neighbour as thyself." This is the Lord's own exposition of His perfect law. And the greatest of the New Testament writers declares love is the fulfilling of law, for every commandment is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The Apostle John used to repeat the same sermon every Sabbath in the church, and it was one brief sentence only, "Little children, love one another." And when they asked him why he never said anything new, his answer was that there was nothing else to say, for this was the substance and summary of all Christ's commandments. Every grace is but a form of love. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance," but each of these is but a phase of love.

Joy is love exulting; peace is love reposing; longsuffering is love enduring; gentleness is the good manners of love; kindness is love in action; faith is love confiding; meekness is love yielding; and temperance is true self-love. If we would therefore have all the graces of the Spirit, we must have the root of all—the spirit of love—and all the branches will spring spontaneously from it and bear the heavenly fruits without effort or strain.

IV. Love is the greatest incentive and motive to action, and is therefore the highest power in Christian life. How easy it is to get people to do things when you get their hearts! Sacrifice and labor are nothing to a loving heart, but without heart everything is drudgery. You cannot save a soul unless you love it. Your affection will become a bond to draw it to Christ. So God gives us the love of souls when He would enable us to win them. You cannot pray for another effectively without love; affection gives wings to devotion, and faith will be in proportion to love. You

cannot endure the privations and toils of the Master's work in hard places without love. The service that Christ is asking from His people today is hard service, and only supreme love to God and intense devotion to Christ can carry you through the perils of the Sudan, the Congo, or the climate of India.

Besides, love lifts us above a thousand distractions and hindrances in our work. Without it we shall be constantly obstructed by annoyances, worries, injuries, wrongs and innumerable things which we will have to stop and regulate; but a loving heart moves on unhindered by any selfish consideration, seeking only to live for God and others, and leaving every other interest with Him. God cannot use people much without great love. It is the element of spiritual power immeasurably more than faith. The men that have been great soul winners and great missionaries have all been men of great hearts and specially anointed with the spirit of love.

V. Love is the greatest element of happiness. The selfish heart is always unhappy. The true center of every life is not self, but something outside of self. God is the pattern of every other existence, and God's life is not for Himself, but the universe. Love is His principle and element, and He is ever giving. And so for every Christian life and every happy life the essential principle is, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Micronesian chief who tried to dig the well for his own exclusive use could get no water to run into it, but when he presented it to his people, it was always full. The fountains that are ever giving are ever full. Happy they that have learned the secret of happiness, to live for God and others.

"Hast thou found some precious treasure?

Pass it on.

Hast thou found some holy pleasure?

Pass it on.

God Himself is ever giving,

Loving is the truest living,

Letting go is twice possessing,

Would you double every blessing,

Pass it on."

VI. Love is the loveliest thing in this world, and the thing which speaks most for God in your life. Everybody can understand it. They may not know much about your deep experiences; they may not appreciate your shout of joy and praise; but they can all feel the weight and value of your unselfish sacrifice and lovely acts. When you stand up in a crowded car to give your seat to some poor man or weary working woman, everybody understands it. Many a man will rise and raise his hat for some fashionably-dressed young lady but let the poor, weary washerwoman stand with her clothes basket for half an hour. But when you remember that every one of these is perhaps a messenger whom Christ has sent to test you, you will find a thousand opportunities of speaking for Him that others miss. When you give up your lower berth in a Pullman car for some poor mother and child that might have to climb up to the top, you often find an opportunity of speaking to that mother of her soul that nothing else could give you. When you sit in the house of God with considerate thoughtfulness for the stranger and the poor whom you can, for a little sacrifice, make to feel more welcome, you do, perhaps, quite as much to lead them to Christ as the man who stands in the pulpit. When you show a loving, unselfish interest in your workingman, your servant girl, the toiling man or woman that ministers

to you in business relationships, there are a thousand little ways in which you can make them understand the spirit of your Christian life, and you can love them into the faith that they see working by love in you.

When Mr. Richards went to the Congo as a missionary, he spent six years trying to preach the natives into Christianity, but in vain. He went home to England to ask the advice of his friends how he could preach so as to save them. They told him to preach according to the theological books—to begin with the law and expound the Scriptures. He did so; he gave them a series of services on the ten commandments, and they said it was very good “palaver.” They liked these commandments and kept every one of them, but they still went on as before, living in dishonesty and sin.

Finally he gave up in despair, and went to God for light, and the Lord led him to begin with the Gospel, which is the great commission of every missionary. He took the gospel of Matthew and began to expound it. He came to the verse, “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” What was he to do? He could not expound it to them as it read unless he was willing to live it before them; but if he did he knew that they would take him at his word, as they were a race of beggars and borrowers, and that within a few hours he would have nothing left in the house. But he was true to his commission. He preached the truth and told them that by the grace of God he meant to live it. They nodded assent and smiled approvingly; and after the service his wife came to him and insisted that if he was going to make a fool of himself, she, at least, would keep her things; so they were locked up in a room and the rest of the household goods were left open. Before sunset a crowd of natives came to see him, one by one, and before they all left,

the house was empty. They had begged or borrowed or stolen everything he had, and had gone to their homes very much delighted with the white man and his religion.

But then God began to speak to these savage hearts, and they said one to another: "This is different from anything we ever heard. This must be God's man; and if this is God's man, we must be careful how we treat him"; and before long the goods were brought back again. He had acted on the principle of love and they felt they must do the same. The result was he had his goods back with interest and he had the hearts of all the people. Before long there was a revival in that place, and today there is a great church on the banks of the Congo that all grew out of that one man preaching and living the life of love. Surely the greatest of these is love!

The Chinese authorities and the American consul in China have borne testimony of the influence of another missionary in that land, who lived on the same principle and who was despised for it by most of his American friends as a crank and a fool. But after he had passed away, the highest authorities in the land bore witness that his life had done more to win them to the Christian religion than any other that had ever been known in that community.

*"So let our lives and lips express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and actions shine
To show the doctrine all divine."*

VII. Love is the everlasting attribute. Faith and hope will pass away, but love never.

*"They sin who tell us love can die.
With life all other passions fly,
But love is indestructible,
Its holy flame ever burneth.
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth."*

Beloved, what will you do in heaven without love? It will be too late to learn it there. God is teaching you now in the school of trial and provocation. Be sure you do not miss your lesson, for if you do not have it you can't get into heaven. God has determined to have one sweet place, and you may be sure He will have no cross, selfish people there. And so if you don't get out of your mean ways here, you will not find room in that world of love, and indeed without it you could not be happy there nor anywhere else. God help us to see our lack of love, to yield ourselves in entire surrender to His holy will in this highest and greatest of all His blessings, and then receive Jesus Himself as the living heart of our life and being, and then it shall be true of us

*"Live thou in love, so shall I give
Thine own love back to thee."*

2

The Love of God

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" 1 John 4:10.

"God commendeth his love toward us; in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" Ephesians 2:4, 5, 7.

"We love him, because he first loved us" 1 John 4:19.

Our love must find its type and source in God. His love is the fountain of all other love and the unapproachable pattern. God's love is as indescribable as it is unapproachable. What language, what figure, what forms of speech or illustration can justly portray that which has neither measure nor limitation, which is an ocean without

a shore, a depth without a fathoming line, an immensity without a border, a height, a depth, a length, a breadth which passes knowledge! Someone has said in quaint and striking language,

*“Could I with ink the ocean fill,
And were the sky of parchment made,
Were every blade of grass a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above,
Would drain that ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though spread from sky to sky.”*

God has been writing His love on the sky and on the land. Every blade of grass is indeed a quill and every drop of the ocean an ink drop in which to write His love and every moment of our existence a blessed commentary upon it, but it will take eternity to unfold its boundless fullness and its infinite preciousness.

I. We see it in the very names and terms which are used to express it. God multiplies language in His effort to express and emphasize His great love. Just listen to a few of these expressions and see if there is anything like them in the Bible. No such language is used about His power, His wisdom, nor even His justice. They are again and again reiterated, but to express His love every possible form of speech is exhausted.

“The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.” Again: “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins.” And again: “That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Once more: “That ye

. . . might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." These are some of the various expressions used.

First, we have His *mercy*; that is love toward the unworthy and unlovely, the wicked and hateful and injurious, those that wrong Him, disobey Him and cause Him only grief and pain. This is something that human love knows nothing of. We can love the amiable, the kind and lovely. "For a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins." This is something that human reason cannot understand. It is the mystery of divine mercy that God should love the loveless and hateful, and that for those who are murdering Him He should pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This is the miracle of Christian love, that it can obey the precept, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, . . . pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." But only those that have received His Spirit into theirs and learned His nature can do it.

Again, *grace* is used to express His love. Grace means the love that expects no return, that is given to those that are helpless and could do nothing either to deserve it or recompense it. We read of the riches of His grace, and "the exceeding riches of his grace."

Again, the word *goodness* describes the activities of love, the positive and actual expressions of it in kind and helpful acts and words. Goodness is love in action, and how good God is! how much He has done for our happiness and well-being!

Again, the word *kindness* is used. This means

kinship. It refers to the attitude in which He places us. He treats us as His relatives, as His children, as members of His household and partners of His very life, taking us into His innermost intimacy, and loving us as children, nay, as the very bride of His affection.

But the best of all these words is *love*. It expresses His delight in those He loves. Love is the outgoing of the whole heart with intense joy and delight in those on whom it bestows its affections. And God really loves us, takes delight in us, treats us as He would treat His own beloved Son, and makes us partakers of all that He has. "For the Lord's portion is his people," and He finds His satisfaction and His joy in their love and blessing.

And when all terms have been exhausted, and all adjectives and adverbs have been piled like mountain on mountain in the great climaxes which vainly seek to express His great heart, He sums it all up in the inexpressible words, "The love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

II. We learn His love from His works. All nature is a revelation of the divine goodness. It is true that sin has introduced many a dark shadow, many a seeming contradiction to the divine goodness; but notwithstanding all, even the story of creation and the volume of nature unite on every page in proclaiming the God of love. Everywhere we see the traces of a decline and fall from a state of perfection. Nature itself reveals the fact that the present condition of things was not primeval, and there must once have been some better age from which the universe has fallen. But even amid the wreck, how much there is that speaks of His goodness! How much of beauty we behold in the heavens and earth! How much of happiness! Even the blossoming flower and the singing bird cannot keep back their tributes to the Creator who has made them to be beautiful and happy.

Look at your own physical organism and think of

its numerous senses and organs. He might easily have made every sense of your body to be a channel of anguish, as they become when distorted by disease; but instead of this He has made them to be the vessels and channels of pleasure. He might have made the food you eat merely nourish you without gratifying you, but He has created you so that it ministers the keenest pleasure to your taste. He might have made everything taste alike, but instead of this He has created innumerable varieties of fruits and food for your gratification. He has filled the air with sweet odors that satisfy the sense of smell. He has adopted the blue of heaven and the verdure of earth to soothe and satisfy your eye. He has adjusted your ear for all the delicate varieties of sound, and He has fitted the external world to minister to this sense with a thousand melodious notes. He has given you affections and He has met them by the ties of home and the friendships of life. He has placed within you instincts and faculties of disposition and of mind, and He has fitly framed you into a world of social life where you find room for the development and exercise of these faculties and powers.

Everywhere where His natural laws are obeyed we find harmony and happiness and the evidences of His loving plan to minister to our happiness and to promote our highest well-being. The very men and women that are disobeying Him and blaspheming Him and doing all in their power to grieve and dishonor Him owe to Him every thrill of joy that stirs their being, every physical enjoyment even in their sinful pleasures, every delight that comes to them in the friendships and affections which they prostitute to His dishonor, and which He yet allows to minister as far as He can to their gratification.

III. We learn the love of God from His ways and providences as much as from His works. His government of this universe is as gracious as was His creating

goodness. How kindly He has held these mighty worlds from collision and destruction! How perfect the order and harmony of nature in its great physical laws! How beneficent these laws when obeyed, and how adapted even their penalties are to keep us from harming ourselves! Even the things that hurt us are kind, because they are meant to keep us back from danger. God has made the very fire to burn us so that we may be warned from destruction, and He has surrounded our path with a thousand little thorns simply to save us from stepping into greater dangers. How wonderful His government of this world!

Even the story of heathen nations is full of beautiful touches of the divine providence. How wisely and graciously God has planned the great movements of nations and armies to bring about His great purpose of love for the world. The story of Egypt and Assyria, of Babylon and Persia, of Greece and Rome, all show a hand ever moving for the special purpose of goodness and mercy toward those who trusted Him. How wonderful His care of Moses and Israel! How marvelous the story of Esther and her people in the days of the Persian Empire! How thrilling the story of Christian history through the centuries, with its countless illustrations of the divine interpolation in love and grace to protect and deliver His trusting people! How full of God's love the story of your life and the providences through which He has led you, and how truly each of us can say:

*“Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ,
Nor is the least a cheèrful heart
That tests these gifts with joy.
Through all eternity to thee,
A joyful song I'll raise,
But oh! eternity's too short
To utter all thy praise!”*

IV. We learn the love of God from His words. It is thus we learn the love of our friends, their kind expressions to us, their assurances of regard, their promises, their encouragements, their tender messages of affection by letter or voice. How we cherish these words, and how much of joy and happiness can radiate from a single line or a single tone of one who loves us! And so God knows how to speak His love. His precious Word is full of gracious messages which every believing heart can receive as His personal assurances of love. The Bible is God's love letter to the heart of faith, and we read its promises as directed to ourselves, and God does not rebuke our holy freedom, but loves to have us take Him at His word and put our names in every promise.

What wonderful words He has spoken! There is nothing in human literature that sounds like the promises of the Bible. There is a sweet cadence in them and a holy tenderness that separates them from all human speech. Read the writings of Plato, the fragments of Socrates, the sayings of Confucius or Buddha, the philosophy of Seneca, and you will find no such sentences as this: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." There is something in that sentence which carries its own divinity with it and speaks with a self-manifesting light as the very voice of God.

Or again, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is nothing ever uttered by mortal lips that speaks like that. We feel as we listen to it that it must come from a greater heart than mortal, and that He that utters it must be divine and His name must be Love.

Or once more, listen to Him as He speaks again: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions:

if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Surely there is a dignity and yet a tenderness in words like these that carry the heart of God with them and speak His tender love as no other words can speak it.

Then there are His gracious promises. How wonderfully they are adapted to prove His love! How He has fenced in the poor sinner with words that almost compel him to take salvation! How often we have thought, when sitting down by some poor trembling soul, of the wonderful words of love that enable us to lead him to Christ and that render it almost impossible for him to escape the resistless logic of divine mercy!

Take, for example, such promises as this: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The doubting heart cannot get away from it. There is no possible excuse nor pretext for doubting, no matter how unworthy, no matter how weak the trust, no matter how long he has been in coming. It is simple and explicit: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Or take again that precious promise: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It matters not what the sin, we have but to confess it. It does not say, if we feel very sorrowful, if we have very strong faith, if we have good resolutions, if we never repeat the sin again, but simply, "If we confess our sin." The soul is shut up by divine love to receive forgiveness and is compelled to lay its burden down and go away rejoicing and believing. The ingenuity of mercy could not go farther in contriving to compel poor sinful hearts to be saved and to be happy.

So again, His promises for the sorrowing, the tried, the tempted, are so various and countless that there is no possible situation for which His love has not provided

some word in season. Are you tempted? "He will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape." Are you anxious? You are bidden to take no anxious thought, but to be "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." Are you insufficient for your burdens and pressures? He declares, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Are you desolate and forsaken? He meets us with the promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Are you conscious of unworthiness? He tells us, "Not for your sakes do I this, but for mine own sake, be ashamed and confounded, oh! house of Israel."

Have you wandered from the way? He tells us, "He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," and that He is our Shepherd, restoring our soul and making us to walk in the right paths for His own name's sake. Are you afraid? He says to us again and again, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God." "Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." Have you a thousand needs for which your resources are inadequate? He says, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

And so His words of love are infinite and full. And in proportion to our trials and difficulties do we find their preciousness and all-sufficiency; so that we can say with the beloved in the Song of Songs: "His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely"; or with the Psalmist, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand."

Then how often the blessed Spirit brings to us His words in more tender and personal messages, whispered to our heart, breathing the comfort, the instruction, the

correction, the love we need, and making the written word a living message from the mouth of the Living God. If God had done nothing else to show His love than to give us this blessed Book, He would have bound our hearts to Him by as many ties as the tens of thousands of promises which it contains.

V. But God's highest manifestation of His love is in redemption. Christ and Calvary are the crowning commendation of the divine love. "God commendeth his love toward us," not by talking about it so much as by this highest pledge, the gift of infinite and everlasting love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That little word "so" is an ocean without a shore, an immensity without a boundary. It is something that cannot be explained nor emphasized by human words. It speaks for itself and bids us bow in silent wonder, and say:

*"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all."*

That cross stands like some great unapproachable mount that, as we look at it from every side, grows ever more wonderful and yet more impossible to paint or picture.

Shall we think of its infinite and amazing cost? Shall we think of the majesty and glory of that gift, God's only Son, and then of the suffering and shame to which He was given – the cruel cross, the awful grave, the curse of sin and its vengeance due to the whole guilty race? Shall we think of the long years during which He was separated from heaven, as well as the hours of agony through which He hung upon Calvary? Shall we think of the stupendous descent He made when He left the throne of Deity and became forever part of

the human race—the Creator, one of a race of sinful, degraded creatures, whose very name in the heavens must have been linked with shame and disgrace?

Shall we think of the gladness with which He came and made that mighty sacrifice? Shall we remember the eternal love in that Father's heart which planned and purposed it all, and then sent Him to accomplish it; for redemption was not an after-thought with God, nor did He need to be constrained to give His consent to the salvation of our race because some satisfaction had been given that appeased His vengeance. But the wonderful plan for human redemption was His own design; the coming of Jesus was His eternal thought; this wonderful redemption was the project of His own everlasting love. And shall we think of the value of the blessings it has brought us? In that gift all other gifts are pledged, for "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

And finally, shall we put our own name into all this and remember that the love which gave Jesus to die was not a general love for humanity as a whole, but it was a personal love for each of us? That sacrifice was for you and for me. He that hung upon that cross was thinking of you and of me when He wept and died. This great love is all for us as individuals, and each can say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

VI. God shows us His love by His grace in our salvation and our daily Christian life. How wonderful His love in our salvation! Little would it have availed us for Christ to die on Calvary had the Holy Spirit not come and sought and found us in our sin and brought us to the Saviour. How long He had to seek some of us! Half a century we had resisted Him until He had to follow us through all the changes and degradations

of a ruined life as step by step we sank deeper and deeper in our guilt and misery and wandered farther and farther from His pleadings till, at last, we sank so low that there was nothing left but to go to Him. Then we found Him ready and waiting, unwearied with all our wicked rejection, and more than willing to take charge of our life and give us back the fullness of His grace and the glories of His heaven. How we love Him for saving us! How we bless the hand that sometimes had to hurt us in order to turn us back from ruin! How gently and tenderly He welcomed us! How sweet the memory of forgiveness and the new joy of His first appearing to our broken hearts! And then, how great the love that took us up and led us on until this day.

Were I to lay at your door this morning a foundling child and expect you to take it and keep it all its days, to be responsible for its food and clothing, its education and future prospects, you would think I was asking a good deal. And if I were to bring one every day, you would soon ask to be excused from such a strain upon your generosity. But every soul that comes to Christ is infinitely more trouble to Him than any child to mother or foster mother. He has to take you for better or for worse and carry you all the coming years. And oh! how much trouble He has had with some of us! He takes you knowing all that is to come, all your failures, dispositions, temptations, backslidings, all the times you shall doubt Him, disobey Him, wander from Him, grieve Him, go into perils that will almost ruin your soul and cause Him infinite trouble in bringing you back.

And yet, knowing all, He takes you forever and will never let you go. Oh! the tender grace He has shown to some of us! Oh! the memories that crowd upon us of His faithful love, so that we can say like David, "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the little hill!" How many times

He has taken us up into the mountain heights of Hermon and shown us the vision of His glory!

And how many times He has met us at some "little hill" and given us some blessing that was more touching even than the greater manifestations of His love and power! How He has shown us His love in restoring us from temptations and wanderings! How often has His love shone forth in the hour of sorrow, when He has come to us as "the God of all comfort," and, "as one whom his mother comforteth," has wiped away our tears and healed our broken hearts!

And how often when there was no sorrow He has made us glad by His communion and His presence. As a mother would pick up her little child and love it and press it to her bosom just because it was so dear, so He has often come to us and filled us with such a strange, sweet joy that we could not understand, and then He has made us to know it is just because He loved us and delighted in us and wanted us to know how dear we were to Him! How good and kind He has been in answering our prayers! Our life is filled with the records and memories of His faithfulness. How many memorials lie along our path, like Ebenezer's, each one crying:

*"Come thou Fount of every blessing.
Tune my heart to sing thy grace.
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of ceaseless praise."*

VII. God's love is yet to be more gloriously displayed in the glory that awaits us, for He has begun with us an everlasting story. His love will never, never, never end. His heart has planned for us blessing upon blessing through ages upon ages forever. Just beyond us lies the bright millennial age, one thousand years of

sinless, deathless joy and blessedness. But this is only the beginning of eternal ages. Beyond that bright millennial sunset lies a brighter morning, and, beyond that, eon after eon of mightier, holier, grander felicities and glories, not only on this green earth, but perhaps in the dominion of the stars and constellations which, perhaps, in the new heavens, is to be our eternal home.

Yes, He has saved us, that "in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Could we behold the vision of that glory now it would be more than we could bear! Some day we shall understand it, and amid its wonders and splendors we shall *begin* to know the boundless and everlasting love of God.

And now, in conclusion, what does all this mean for us? First, it means that God expects us to believe in His love and never to doubt nor question Him. In human friendship it is very delightful to be able to feel that we never doubted our friend or that we never were doubted by our friends. We all have some dear one that we have never doubted, and it would seem to us an awful crime even to imagine a doubt against him. We have some friends that have never doubted us. We value the love and confidence of those who, under the severest strain have never questioned us. If someone who has known me for a lifetime came to me and said, "I have confidence in you because I have investigated your character and believe from evidence that it is good," I should scarcely value his regard. But if he came to me in the dark days of calumny and cruel slander, and said, "My brother, I know you. I trust you, and I cannot distrust you," I should feel that he was indeed a friend. Thank God for a few such friends. Thank God for some hearts that have never even been tempted to doubt, because back of their trust was a love that could not question,

That is what God expects of us. Sometimes our trust is tried by the strangest seemings, but that is just the time He wants us to trust Him most; for often behind these seeming contradictions and painful providences lies the deepest purpose of blessing. Therefore

*"If He sometimes sends us chastening,
If He sometimes must reprove,
It is just because He loves us
With an everlasting love."*

Second, He wants us to live in the element and atmosphere of His love. He wants us to have a communion with Him so close that we shall never remember a frown. I remember, when a school boy, how I prided myself on never being punished by my teacher. There was a delicate confidence between us which I could not bear to have broken. Had he been compelled to chastise me, I should have felt that something was lost that never could be regained. Never again could I have looked into his face with quite the same delight. And so, God wants us to be the same with Him, the children of unbroken confidence, so close to His bosom, so uninterrupted in our obedience and confidence that the precious promise shall indeed be true for us, "I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Jesus has said to us, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

Two things will keep this evermore. One, simple trust; and the other, implicit obedience. Let us never doubt His love, and let us never disobey His will; so shall we ever dwell in love and in God, and it shall be true of us for evermore,

*“Living in the love, the love of Jesus,
Leaning upon His breast,
Walking in His holy will each moment,
This is a heaven of rest.”*

3

The Love of the Divine Trinity

*“And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him”
John 14:21.*

*“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. . . . I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father”
1 John 2:13.*

“The love of the Spirit” Romans 15:30.

These three verses speak distinctively of the love of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit, and of our personal knowledge of the three persons of the Godhead.

There is something very wonderful in personality. What is the difference between you and your neighbor? You may be just alike in features, form and stature, but one of you is inexpressibly dear to me, the other a matter of indifference. You have ten children, but each one is a distinct world of interest and love to you. You do not love them all together, but you love each one with your

whole heart. If one is taken from you the other cannot supply its place. You know the voice, the touch, the step of your friend, and the very name and memory wake up a thousand throbbing thoughts and feelings. There is one woman in the world who fills all your heart and is interlinked with all your life. There are thousands of others more beautiful, more cultivated, more gifted than she, but none can take her place. Her personality is her own and you know her from all others, and even her touch is different to you. And so God has created a universe of persons, each a little world, unique, alone, a strangely solemn immortal "I," so dependent, yet so independent, so associated, yet so isolated, so bound up with other hearts and yet in some respects so strangely, utterly alone.

This strange fact of personality has its beginning in God Himself. God is a person, not a principle, not an embodiment of virtues and attributes, but a living being, an actual subsistence, a heart as sensitive and real as your own. Nay, God is not only one person, but three. In the divine family, if we might dare to use such a term, there is a Father, there is a Mother, and there is a Son, and that Son is a Brother and a Bridegroom, so that every human relationship in a measure is represented in a glorious and sacred Trinity. How three can be one is not so great a mystery even in human experience. On that bench three men can sit together and constitute one court, and if their judgments were always identical and their thoughts always parallel the unity would be perfect. And so, on that eternal throne there sits a Godhead consisting of three persons, each an individual, and yet together a unity, never differing in thought, purpose, nor feeling, the glorious Three in One. In a family there may be three persons: the father, mother, and son. If they should always agree in purpose, plan, and conception, and affection, they too would be

a copy in miniature and in perfection of the Godhead. Each of them has his or her distinctive personality and yet all are one.

So in the Divine Trinity, the Father has offices and attitudes which the Son cannot exercise nor sustain, and the Holy Ghost has relationships which the Father cannot fill, and the blessed Son has a place which neither the Father nor the Spirit can touch. And yet they are ever one although ever distinct. Each is a living individual existence, possessing all the power and all the perfection of the other, and yet all ever cooperating in perfect accord and inseparable unity.

Now, each of these divine persons is personally related to us with a distinctive bond of intimacy and fellowship. We read in these verses of the love of the Father, the love of the Son, and the love of the Spirit. We read here of knowing "Him that is from the beginning," that is the Son, and also of the "little children knowing the Father."

Some of us can remember a time in our experience when we tried to grasp the doctrine of the Trinity, and our intellect sank oppressed under its tremendous weight. We went to God in helplessness and almost in despair, and then there came to us something so different, and yet so satisfactory. It was a personal revelation of God in His threefold personality.

The blessed Son was revealed to us, and we knew Jesus not only in His humanity, but in His deity as our individual friend, whose person we could recognize distinctly from all others, and whose love thrilled our heart with a joy above all other.

Then the Father was revealed to us through the Son, and yet distinct from the Son, a glory inaccessible and infinite from whose bosom came that other glory, the incarnate Christ. We knew the Father and the Son that dwelt in the bosom of the Father.

And then there came to us a third revelation more insensible, if possible, than the others, but most distinct and conscious. We knew that there was a person that had made Jesus real to us, that had shed abroad the love of the Father in our heart; there was a hand that was unfolding the vision; there was a light that was illuminating the picture; there was a person that was bringing us into the presence of the Father and the Son, and that was the blessed Holy Ghost. That Spirit Presence so peaceful, so modest, so self-hiding, so gentle, so considerate of our own personal independence as not to do violence to any of our faculties, came in sweet accord with our whole being and approached us through our own spiritual sensibilities. It was the blessed Holy Ghost, and we have come to know that Spirit as our innermost consciousness and our dearest and nearest friend.

And now we understand the Trinity, not through abstract conception, not through intellectual perception, not as a dogma that we could write or talk about, but as a blessed, satisfying fellowship. We know our Father, we know our Mother, we know our Brother and Bridegroom, and we have come into the fellowship of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ.

As we venture for a little to touch these separate cords, to unfold in the language of the Scripture itself these various aspects of the divine being and the divine love, may the Holy Ghost Himself awaken in each of us a responsive touch, and may this become the interpreter to us of words which otherwise would be too high and deep for us to comprehend!

I. The Father's Love

1. Away back in the most distant ages that love began. We were chosen in Him before the foundation of

the world. Our love is not a second thought nor the result of Christ's redeeming work, but the primary cause of it and the original thought of our everlasting Father. Before the mountains were built, before the earth was made, He loved us and purposed our creation, redemption and glory. He has never had any other thought for us than the one first and highest purpose of everlasting love; and each of us can look back and remember that it was true of us, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

2. His love is shown next by His accepting us in Christ, forgiving our sins, justifying us freely by His grace, and accepting us in the Beloved. This love is unfolded to us in the Saviour's picture of the prodigal's return and the father's welcome. This is the Father's reclaiming love, a love so tender that He blots out the very consciousness of our sin and takes us at once to the nearest and highest place, refusing to listen to our wretched complaints and conditions or to permit us to take the place of a servant, opening to us all the fullness of a Father's heart and a Father's house. "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." This is very strong language; literally it is "in the Son of His Love," therefore, we are accepted even as the Son of His love and as dear as He.

3. The Father manifests His love in begetting us and recognizing us as His sons. This is a marvelous love over which even the Apostle John, who lived in the bosom of his Father, stands amazed, exclaiming, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" And then he adds, "Now are we the sons of God." We are not only called, but we are the sons of God. This is a rank that angels cannot claim; this is a place that Adam never knew; this is to be partaker of the divine

nature and even of God Himself. As His sons we are entitled to His peculiar love, almighty protection, bountiful provision and everlasting faithfulness. Your child is not related to you by a contingent bond; he cannot cease to be your child; he may dishonor you, he may disobey you, he may need to be disciplined by you, but he is forever your child and loved the most when most unworthy.

Oh, how strange and tender, how strong and sweet this everlasting love of the Father!

4. The Father shows His love to us by training us, educating us, disciplining us. And so we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews of son-training. It is called "chastening" in our verses, but this is an unfortunate translation. The Greek calls it *paideia*, which means "the training of a child." And so God educates us as His sons. Sometimes the lessons are hard, sometimes the hours are long, sometimes the tasks are imperative, and sometimes the rod may even be applied, but it is all in the Father's love. There is a great difference between the discipline of the prison and the discipline of the school. One is penal and the other is parental. Our Father's chastenings are always in love.

The Queen of England sent her son to learn to be a mariner. He had to stand before the mast and to do hard service on the stormy deck, but it was for his good. Those hardships were to make him manly and fit him for his future station. You send your boy to school when it would be pleasanter for his flesh to play in the yard, but you require him to undergo severe discipline and fulfill laborious tasks because you love him. You are training your boy for manly service in the great field of life, and you do not count it a hardship, but a great opportunity. And so your Father's discipline is loving, faithful, indispensable, and thorough. "Now no chastening . . . seemeth joyous, but grievous: nevertheless

afterward it yieldeth the peacable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

5. The Father shows His peculiar love to those that obey Him and receive the Lord Jesus in His fullness. There is a wonderful promise in this passage in John, "If a man love me . . . my Father will love him." God's love to us is graduated according to our obedience and fidelity to Jesus. God's mercy in saving us is without respect of persons, but after we become His children He recompenses us by His greatest reward, His own love and approval, according to our obedience. Therefore, Jesus Himself said, "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." Christ's obedience won for Him the delight of His Father, and He still delights in every loving and obedient child. If you would constantly enjoy His approving smile, let Him see a spirit of single-hearted devotion to Jesus and uncompromising and unqualified obedience to His will.

6. The Father's highest love is manifested to those who are most intimately united to the person of His Son.

Our union with Jesus and His constantly abiding in us will bring to us the same love which the Father has to Him. Therefore we read these wonderful words in the parting prayer of the Son of man, "I in them, and thou in me, . . . that the world may know that thou . . . hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." The same love which the Father has to Jesus He has to those in whom Jesus fully dwells. It is not you He loves; there is nothing in you to love; but it is the image, nay, the very presence of His Son in you that He delights in. Just as that father loves his child, in a measure, because it is part of the mother's life and that mother is the dearest object of his affection, so God loves you because He sees in you the face of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus and the life of Jesus. It is, therefore, Christ love and Christ life.

If we have received Christ to abide within us, we

may know that we are as dear to our Father as He is, and we can go to Him in holy confidence and boldness and know the meaning of those wondrous words, "We may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we also in this world." The very place of Jesus in His bosom is ours. Like Him we may think of ourselves as lying "in the bosom of the Father," and we, too, may be "daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

Oh, what a place we may have in the Father's love! Shall we claim it and in it shall we find our portion and our joy?

II. *The Love of Jesus*

1. It is a self-sacrificing love; "He loved me and gave himself for me." This is a wonderful truth when the Holy Spirit makes it personal to us and we see and feel that it was for each of us that He thus died, that His love was personal, that He actually thought of us when He hung upon that cruel tree.

2. His love is a seeking and saving love. He loves us before we come to Him, and His love follows us until it finds us. How patient, how ingenuous, how untiring the love of Jesus for the sinner! See Him as He stands at Jacob's well and watches for the soul of the Samaritan woman, catching it with holy guile; see Him as He seeks and finds the hardhearted Zaccheus and breaks him all to pieces with His love; see Him as He conquers the proud heart of Saul and binds him eternally to His own heart by bonds of grateful love; think of His love to the mighty host of sinful men and women who have been subdued by it and transformed into saints and servants; think how He loved us and sought and found us. It is the love of the Good Shepherd missing the lost one and going after it until He finds it.

3. It is a keeping love. What infinite trouble He has with us! How much thought and care we cause Him! How much He has to bear with us and from us! How often we disappoint Him! How often we risk our very souls by disobedient presumption and heedlessness! How rich the grace which He bestows upon us! How unceasing the intercession He is exercising for us at God's right hand! How infinite the blessing that He pours upon our heads! It is probably true that no single blessing ever reaches us without coming through His name and receiving the endorsement of His hand upon the check before it passes Heaven.

4. It is a sympathetic love. It is a love that has entered into our very nature and life. It has made Him partaker of our humanity and brought Him down to Bethlehem and Calvary. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are." "He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." He who wept at Lazarus' tomb still shares our every sorrow.

*"He who wept and prayed in anguish,
In Gethsemane,
Drinks with us each cup of trembling,
In our agony.
Yesterday, today, forever,
Jesus is the same;
All may change, but Jesus never,
Glory to his name!"*

5. Jesus has a special love for those that are entirely His own. For He as well as the Father declares in John 14 that He gives His love as a recompense to the obedient heart and to the one that gives Him right

of way. He says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and I will love him." He says again, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." There is an inner circle of the absolutely obedient ones and the hearts that are always true; to these the Master gives His peculiar love. It is when Christ dwells in your heart and you have your being rooted and grounded in love that you are able to comprehend, with all saints, the depth and height, the length and breadth, and to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge.

6. It is a love of peculiar intimacy. He calls Himself by many tender names—three especially, our Friend, our Brother and our Bridegroom. All that these tender names mean of holy human affection, Jesus is to us. The highest of all is the Bridegroom's love. He calls us His sister, His spouse, or rather His sister spouse. There is something deeply sacred, sweet and holy in this combination. It is the union of the passionless love of the brother with the ardent affection of the husband. All that is earthly is taken out of it, all that is loving and tender is added to it.

Do we know Him thus, and can we say of Him in all these endearing aspects, "This is my beloved and this is my friend?"

III. *The Love of the Spirit*

1. If Jesus is the Brother and Bridegroom, the Holy Ghost is represented in the Bible under the picture of a mother. The allusion in the third chapter of John to our being born of the Spirit is most distinct in this direction, and the very picture is full of tenderness. All we know of the Holy Ghost is in the direction of gentleness and love; the favorite emblem, the Dove, is suggestive of nothing but tenderness. For the love of the Spirit needs no other proof than the very fact that for centuries this

blessed One has chosen for His abode this uncongenial world of sin and sorrow. Scarcely do we realize, perhaps, that while the Second Person of the Trinity condescended to live on earth for thirty-three years, the Third Person has had no other home since the time of Christ.

2. But not less is the love of the Spirit in calling the sinner to Christ. His it is to knock at the closed door of the heart and wait through all the years of indifference and rebellion and wickedness which He has often to endure. How patient and unceasing His love! How unwilling He is to be grieved away or take His everlasting flight! Some of us He has spent half a century in wooing and winning to the arms of Jesus.

3. The love of the Spirit is seen in the new birth. For, as we have already suggested, the regenerate soul is born of the Spirit and brought forth from the very travailing bosom of this blessed Mother. Real as the pangs of maternal anguish are the sorrows of the maternal Spirit of God over every heart that is laid on the bosom of Jesus.

4. But not only are we born of the Spirit, but that same gentle Mother becomes the Educator and Guide of our whole life, leading us into all truth, directing us in the way we should go and with maternal tenderness holding our hand and guiding our way through the path of life.

Oh, how gentle and faithful that guiding hand has been! How often it has saved us from perils that we never knew! How we shall bless the Holy Ghost when we look backward along the vista of the past in the light of heaven! How we shall understand the love of the Spirit!

5. The love of the Spirit is shown in the grace that He bestows in sanctifying us. When shall we ever forget the thrill of joy that sealed our consecration and witnessed to our cleansing from all unrighteousness? That was but the outburst of the love that thrilled His own heart.

6. The Spirit's love is manifest in His indwelling. He comes to abide in us. He makes our heart His home and sheds abroad the love of God and brings all heaven to fill the sanctuary of the soul.

7. The spirit's love is seen in His comforting influence. How He cheers the drooping heart, encourages the despondent, wipes away the tears from the mourner's eye and fills us with a joy that we cannot understand! When the heart is ready to sink in bitterness and despair, He is the joy-bringer and the everlasting Comforter.

8. The Spirit's love is seen in the power that He gives us for our service, endueing us with the wisdom and might of Jesus, making our words effective and our lives fruitful, and bringing out of the simplest services influences that shall last forever.

Everlasting praise and love be unto thee, oh, blessed Holy Ghost, for Thy boundless everlasting love to us! All we know of Jesus, all we enjoy of the precious gospel we owe to Thee. Thou art the life of our life, the joy of our joy, the link that binds us to God and heaven, and the gentle Dove whose wings will some day bear our spirit across the void or lift up our forms to meet the Lord in the air. Blessed be the Holy Ghost!

And now, in conclusion, if God is to us Father, Mother, Brother and Bridegroom, let us learn to recognize Him as such. Let us enter into these holy fellowships. Let us lift up every human relationship into divine significance. Let us recognize the earthly but as a channel to hold the heavenly, as a mirror to reveal the divine, as an alphabet in which to spell out the deeper, closer bonds which God draws us into with Himself.

And if some of our hearts have had to have the pitcher broken that the light might shine, let it go; the earthly has only perished that we might learn the heavenly. When we have risen from the human to the divine, from the intermediate to the immediate and everlasting, then perhaps God may give back the other

without danger of our worshiping the creature more than the Creator.

First let us find "all in God," and then we shall be able to "find God in all."

4

Our Love to God

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment”
Mark 12:30.

A distinguished French preacher, a Rationalist, was once invited by a humble, but evangelical minister to preach in his pulpit on this text. He accepted the invitation and the good pastor and his people prayed much that the Lord would bless the sermon to the preacher even more than to the hearers. He was a brilliant and scholarly man who did not believe in the work of Christ except in a rationalistic sense, and so he came with an elaborate discussion of some ethical question suggested by the text. But, as he went on in the sermon, he became evidently confused and moved, and after a little while he threw away his manuscript and made a humble confession to his audience, telling them that, while standing there and thinking about these wonderful words, he had been convicted of his own utter

sinfulness and helplessness. He had seen something in the light of God of this searching law of love that required his whole heart and soul and mind and strength, of his own utter inability to meet these requirements, and of the worthlessness of all mere human morality or ethical culture to satisfy the imperative and infinite demands of God's perfect law and God's infinite heart. There and then he asked the people to pray for him that he might find an answer to the cry of his heart.

Before that service was ended God was pleased to reveal to him the Lord Jesus Christ as the only answer that could meet his need. He saw Him as the atonement and satisfaction for his wretched failure, and more than this as the Author of the love which he himself could never awaken in his own heart, but which Christ was willing to implant there from His own bosom and to nourish into all fullness of the divine will. He came down from that pulpit an evangelical minister and a saved man, and for many years was one of the devoted and honored leaders of the evangelical church of this country.

In this little incident lies the whole story of the Gospel. God's demand of every human being is an infinite love worthy to meet His own, and the only source from which this can ever come is the heart of Christ.

I. The Law of Love

What God requires of us is love. He is not satisfied with our acceptance of a creed or outward conformity to a law, our mechanical service or our ceremonial worship; He wants our heart and our whole heart. He gives us an infinite love and He demands the same in return. Without this nothing else will satisfy Him; without this the service He asks will be impossible and intolerable.

The only motive adequate for the demands of Christianity is an intense devotion which will find in

God the object of our being and the satisfaction of all our desires. The human heart has lost its center; self has become its god; the natural man lives to please himself; the essence of sin is selfishness. And the only antidote to this is a love so exclusive that it leaves no room for any mastery of the heart and life but God alone.

II. *The Philosophy of Love*

How shall this love be produced in selfish, sinful human hearts? There are tremendous obstacles. In the first place, God is so far distant, so infinitely removed above us, so great and high that we cannot love Him naturally, but are rather oppressed by His majesty and awed by His greatness. Then further, to the natural heart He does not seem attractive, but terrible; His power overawes us and His justice alarms us. He is holy and righteous, but this can only bring us into collision with Him if we are unholy and unrighteous; and the natural heart is full of doubts, fears and guilty apprehensions of His anger and His justice. Such influences are not favorable to love, and, indeed, render it impossible.

There is, still further, the fatal fact that the human heart naturally dreads and hates God. Corrupted by the Fall, it has lost its original confidence and love and there is in it an untamed and instinctive repulsion toward God, just as a hawk and a tiger are naturally wild and ferocious. You can pat a little hawk and an infant tiger all you please and treat them with the tenderest kindness, but they will strike you with instinctive hate the first opportunity. It is part of their nature. So the human heart naturally dreads God; the carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God.

It is evident that before we can meet this divine law of love there must be some extraordinary changes.

First of all, God must reveal Himself to us in His true character and remove the misapprehensions which we feel toward Him. We must see Him as a God of goodness, whose attributes will attract us rather than repel us. And so He has revealed Himself in His gospel, and especially in the character and work of Jesus, as a God of infinite mercy, grace and love. The clouds are melted from His throne and His face shines with the eternal sunlight of infinite beneficence.

Further, we must know that all the causes of separation are removed between Him and us. A guilty conscience must have its fears allayed and be sure that there is no cause for apprehension on account of its guilt, that no stroke of punishment need ever be expected from that divine hand, but that every question has been settled, every sin forgiven and that there is perfect reconciliation and acceptance.

This has been done through the atonement of Christ. The sin has been fully recognized and settled by a sufficient satisfaction and atonement; every penalty has been met by another; and on the most solid foundation an everlasting covenant of peace has been made between God and every sinful man that will accept His love through Jesus Christ.

This is the meaning of the great atonement, or rather, at-one-ment.

This is the meaning of those extraordinary words, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. . . . We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." This is the only basis for the creation of divine love in a human heart.

This must be founded, first, in a knowledge of God in the gospel, and, second, a personal reconciliation to Him through the finished work of Christ.

But there is a third step that God must take. We cannot love one that is very far above us and out of sympathy with us. We must come near to those we love, and they must be able to touch us in personal relationship. A God on Mount Sinai or on the throne of the universe we never can love; He must come nearer to us. The glorious prince who would win the peasant for his bride must come down from his throne and lay aside his royal robes, visit her in disguise in her rustic home, and meet her in the country lanes and the rural garden and cottage as a neighbor and a friend, before her trembling, little heart can repose in simple confidence in his affection and meet him, in some sense, as an equal and a friend. And so the great God has come down to us and visited us that He might win our love. The Prince of Glory has become the little baby of Bethlehem, the man of Galilee, the simple, loving friend who walked among men and women and little children like the rest of us, who was hungry and weary, who suffered often and wept like us, and at last died, was laid in the grave and has become bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, brother of our race, our own dear Christ.

We can love Him; we cannot help loving Him; He touches us with the finger of a child, with the tenderness of a woman, with the simplicity and sympathy of a human heart. And then when we know that He came from Heaven from the very bosom of God, that it was He who made this world and will judge it at the last, when we behold Him stilling the tempest, raising the dead, feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes, and proving by His mighty works and His resurrection from the dead that He is indeed the Son of God, oh! He lifts our whole heart right up to heaven, and He takes the love we are giving to Him as a man and as a friend and binds it around the very heart and throne of God. And loving Him, we have learned to love God with all

our heart and soul and mind and strength. We see our God in the face of Jesus Christ and we hear Him saying to us, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

One more thing is wanting. Love must be begotten and nourished by the greatest kindness and affection on the part of its object. We do not merely love people because they are lovely, but we love them because they love us. A very homely person may become extremely dear to us through acts of kindness on their part which awaken all our gratitude and then our tenderest affection. This is true of divine love; we cannot love until we are fully assured of His personal interest in us.

And, therefore, He has taken infinite pains to satisfy us of His regard. Not only has He created us with infinite goodness and provided for us with bountiful care, but, above all, He has redeemed us at infinite cost. The story of redemption is a love-letter written in the blood of a human heart, for "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Not only has He given Christ to suffer and die for us, but He has shown to each of us personally, the tenderest love, seeking us, calling us, saving us, manifesting to us the deepest kindness and binding us to His heart by ten thousand acts of blessing, so that every Christian can say in grateful remembrance, "We love him, because he first loved us."

There is still one more divine touch necessary to bring us into the love of God. He Himself must awaken in us the very love that is to meet His own. Indeed He must create it in us and impart it as a new life by putting into us His own very heart. All that we have said about the loveliness and the love of God may be understood and believed, and yet there may be no response from the human heart. We may know that God is only good and kind; we may recognize Him in the person of His

Son, coming down to meet us on our own level; we may know that all the barriers between Him and us have been removed by the atonement of His blessed Son; we may be told the story of His eternal love to us and believe it to be true; and yet in the very face of all this portraiture of grace and these tender messages of love, our heart may be as loveless as an iceberg and as incapable of rising to meet Him as that iceberg is to reach the clouds.

In a Scottish pulpit the distinguished and graceful Dr. Blair once said, as he closed his sermon before an admiring audience, "Virtue is a being so lovely that she only needs to be seen to be worshipped." That evening a minister of a different type occupied that pulpit, and, referring to the eloquent passage of the morning, said, "Virtue did come down from heaven in human form and became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ; and instead of worshipping her the world took that glorious and perfect man, condemned Him as a malefactor, and crucified Him as an outcast of earth and heaven." Nay, after all that God has said and done, the human heart is still estranged and must be born again into the love of God before it can return it to Him. Therefore, the blessed Holy Spirit takes the Gospel of Jesus and the revelation of His person and applies them to our heart by His quickening touch, so that we do believe and receive the truth and become transformed by it so as to give back God's love again to Him.

Jesus Christ not only comes to us from God bringing to us the Father's love, but He goes back from us to God, uniting Himself with us and enabling us to exercise toward His Father the very same feelings and affections which He Himself has. In a word, He puts His own heart in us and enables us to trust with His trust and love with His love.

Dear friend, would you enter into the love of God?

First of all, believe the gospel, the story of the Father's love through the Son; come to Him as a sinner and receive His mercy and forgiveness and then His quickening Spirit as a free gift, and there will come into your new heart a love which shall be born of God, and you will be able to say with a glad response, "We love him, because he first loved us."

III. *The Life of Love*

The Christian's life is a life of love. The first, sweet touch which thrills the forgiven heart is but the beginning of an everlasting experience of a deeper, higher, diviner love. "Yea, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth all knowledge."

Now, how are we to come into the fullness of this life of love, and how are we to grow in it into all the maturity of the sons of God?

In a general way, it may be said that love is the very substance of sanctification, and that we never come fully into it until we become wholly sanctified unto God. A newly converted soul has many touches of love, but they are inconstant and intermittent and often succeeded by conflicts, doubts, fears, relapses, and experiences of coldness, indifference, and spiritual depression and declension. If we would abide in His love we must learn to abide in Him and to receive Him as our abiding life.

1. We must recognize in this new life the kind of love that He requires of us. Much suffering and confusion will be avoided by understanding the real nature of divine love. It is not the mere emotion of pleasurable feeling, the thrill of delightful excitement, a warm gust

of ardor and fervor succeeded perhaps by reaction; but is a great principle.

It really means the voluntary dedication of our whole being to God. It begins with a definite, deliberate choice of God, the decision to be His and His only, to accept His will as the law of our life, and His glory as its great end, and Himself as our joy and portion. So it is really expressed by the act and habit of entire consecration. The love He requires is "all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy mind, and all thy strength," and simply means the giving up of all our powers to Him to be possessed by Him and used for His glory. It means the renouncing of our natural will and our willing choice of His will as our highest good, and then the devotion of all the possibilities of our being to Him to be used for the highest purposes of His kingdom and glory.

The man or woman who is living to please himself or others does not know the love of God. "Ye are they which justify yourself before men," Jesus said, "but I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." You may not have much religious emotion, but if you can truly say, "Every joy of my will and every power of my being is the Lord's and my chief desire is for Him to make the best He can of my life," you are most truly living out the real meaning of the divine law and divine love.

2. Remember that love is born of faith and depends upon the habitual recognition of your standing in Christ. Therefore cultivate the constant habit of recognizing yourself as an object of divine love, and say with John, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Refuse ever to doubt His perfect love to you. No matter what comes to you from your Father, always recognize it as sent in love. Hold firmly to His gracious promise, "I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Keep yourself in the love of

God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Especially remember what the Apostle John has said: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we also in this world." It is thus that our love is made perfect even in the day of judgment, by regarding ourselves in Himself. Our standing is the same as His; the Father looks upon us as He looks upon Him. We stand in His righteousness, in His merits, in His rights, in His purity, and even in His love. And so when we see nothing in ourselves to approve and are tempted to think God cannot care for us at all, let us remember God sees us as He sees His dear Son, and loves us even as He loves Him, and immediately our hearts will respond with delight and confidence, and we will know that we are accepted in the Beloved, and shall have boldness even in the awful day of His coming.

Let us ever stand in Christ; let us ever present Him to the Father as our Life and as our Representative, and then the love wherewith He loves the Son shall be in us, because He is in us.

3. Let us recognize the matter of temperament and love according to our nature. Every person does not show love the same way. You may have one little child in your home who is demonstrative, gushing, effusive, and always expressing her love; but perhaps she has not the truest heart in your family. There is another little one who says little, but one look from you would break her heart. You will always find her doing little things that others forgot, bearing little sacrifices, showing little kindnesses, perhaps suffering in silence for your sake, and you know that hers is the deepest, truest heart in all your home.

Orpha kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her. And so God has His Ruths and they are often writing hard things against themselves, and saying,

*"Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint."*

And yet, beloved, what is the real choice of your heart this moment? What is the real purpose of your life? What is the real outcome of every day? Is God getting the best out of you every moment? Then perhaps He is saying to you, as He smiles above your tears and fears, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

4. Come near to Him and bring Him into all the intimacies of your life if you would grow in His love. You cannot love people at a distance if you want them to touch the most intimate things in your life. If you want to know all the love of Jesus, take Him into your innermost heart and give to Him all the most sacred things in your life. Let Him come into your innermost affection; let Him search to the core of your very heart; let Him be the confidant of every thought, the sharer of every joy; bind Him to your heart by ten thousand little things; fill up each day with innumerable trifles in which He has a part.

Love is fed more by little things than by great ones. Many a necklace of jewels means less to the receiver than some little flower which a loving hand has plucked, in danger, for the loved one. Christ is endeared to us by the countless little things we take to Him to do for us. You wake in the night with a chill, you look to Him, and lo! He touches your body with life and healing, and for days the memory of that touch will thrill you with love and gratitude. You lose your keys and know not where to find them. You search until you are baffled, then you think of asking Him, and in a moment you find them and are extricated from some great embarrassment, and you feel the touch of God as though His very presence had been unveiled to you, and for hours the memory of that answered prayer lingers with you. You come to some

trying emergency; you are in real peril and know not what to do. You look to Him, and lo! again you are not ashamed, and your heart leaps up to heaven with the cry, "Jesus is good to my soul."

These are the ways we grow in His love until, like the banyan tree, which is rooted to the earth, not by one trunk, but by a hundred returning branches which strike into the soil and become new trunks and roots, supporting the vast expanse of spreading branches, so our life becomes rooted in a hundred places to the heart of our God.

5. Better even than this, do little things for Him. The people we love best are the people we do most for. You are most attached to the people that do most for you. The little child that requires constant care is your favorite. The person for whom you have sacrificed most is dearest to you. When Jesus wanted to bind the Samaritan woman to Him He asked her to give Him a drink of water. When He wanted Abraham to be His friend forever, He asked him to give up his son. Abraham never forgot that he was willing to do it, and God never did either. Perfect and universal obedience is the best test of love. "If ye love me," Jesus said, "keep my commandments." And again, "Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you." And again, "This is the love of God that you keep his commandments."

Once in a while we get a special test, and oh, if we might always meet it so that we ourselves will never have the upbraiding thought that we held anything back from God!

6. Live in the atmosphere of love. There are different kinds of life. Some people live a life of forms; their religion consists of ceremonies, observances, things they do and say. Others live a life of intellectual religion; their religion is largely a creed and doctrine, a set of truths, things they think, sermons they preach or hear,

views they hold, principles in which they unite in a testimony for the truth. Others again live a life of duty; conscience is their predominant quality, obligation is their leading principle; but there is a certain angle and a certain strain about their life. It is true and right, but a little hard and a little negative. Again, others live a life of service; they are chiefly known for the work they do; they are always busy and bustling; their life is a mass of machinery, perfect, orderly, useful; but lacking repose and sweetness.

The ideal life is the life of love. Christ has put it in a single sentence: "Live in love." It gives a certain complexion, atmosphere, element to our life. You know what a love-life means in human relationships. That bride and bridegroom in the early halcyon days are living a love-life. Now we may live such a life with Christ, a life in which His tenderness and our delight in Him will be the predominant elements, and we shall be ever conscious of a love that has no cloud, no disobedience, no reproof, but in which we are conscious every moment that we please Him and that we delight in Him. It is the love-life of the Lord; it is the land of Beulah; it is the privilege of the abiding and consecrated child of God; it is the place of the bride, betrothed, robed and waiting for the coming of her Lord, and singing every moment:

*"My life is all transfigured with the sweet touch
of love,
On all around there shineth a glory from above;
The water of earth's pleasure is changed to heavenly
wine,
And life, like Cana's wedding, becomes a feast
divine."*

7. Let our love and life be artless, unconscious, without strain or thought of self. The people that love

the most think least about their love and most about the object of it. You ask that wife if she loves her husband and she would be surprised at your question; it never occurred to her to think of her own love; she is thinking rather of him. Ask me if I love Jesus, and I should have to stop and think; I am so absorbed in thinking of Him and being busy for Him that it never occurs to me to look at my own emotions, and if I do I might come into darkness and not be very successful in analyzing them.

It is blessed to love without thinking about it. The most beautiful touch in all the pictures of the rewards of the last day is that place where the righteous answer:

“Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?”

It did not occur to them that they had done anything for Jesus. They had not analyzed their feelings nor been conscious of doing it for Jesus; it was so natural for them to do it for Him that they did it unconsciously, and all unconscious things are the most perfect, spontaneous and beautiful.

So let us be filled with His love and it will live itself.

IV. The Claims of Christ upon our Love

“Lovest thou me?” the Master asks of each disciple with tender pleading and longing. He expects our first and highest love for Himself, personally, and He has a right to it. More than all our service, more than all our work to build up a cause, is our personal devotion to Him. Mary’s gift was precious because it was personal. “Ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always,” was His tender suggestion of a danger which has often happened since, being more occupied with the work of Christ than with Christ Himself.

Then we need the love of Christ in order to fit us

for His work. Nothing else will give it its true aim and center, and nothing else will sustain us amid its pressures. When Jesus was about to send Simon to take care of His flock, He did not ask him, "Lovest thou my sheep and my lambs?" but it was, "Lovest thou me?" Mere love to people will not enable us to be true to them; but love to Christ will give us a reflected love to others that will enable us to touch them from Him and for Him and to bless them as our own direct touch never could.

"Lovest thou me?" He asked Simon, and Simon answered, "Lord, I love thee dearly"; and then Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." "Lovest thou me?" He asked again, and Simon answered again, somewhat grieved, "Lord, thou knowest I love thee dearly," and then Jesus gave a second commission, "Feed my feeble sheep." And now a third time He asked, taking up Peter's stronger word, "Lovest thou me dearly?" and Peter answered with all his heart, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest I love thee dearly"; and then Jesus answered with the third commission, "Feed my sheep." These three delicate trusts, the feeding of the lambs, the children and the newly saved, the shepherding of the feeble wanderer and back-slider, and the nurturing of the stronger sheep need, as their inspiration and motive, not so much love to the sheep and lambs as love to the One who owns them. Oh! if we love Him we shall love His own far better than any human preference or sentiment can enable us to love.

If we go to our work from the bosom of the Master we shall not lack the tenderness and sympathy, the unction and passionate love of souls that will draw them, not to us, but to Him, and touch them, not with our sympathy, but with His great love. As yonder moon shines with the reflected light of the sun, so all other love must come from the love of Jesus if it would be true, lasting and effectual.

V. Conclusion

There is a very solemn passage in the closing sentence of one of Paul's letters that may well sum up the practical truths which we have been considering: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," which means accursed at the coming of the Lord. We may well pause and ask, or rather ask the Lord to ask us, "Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ?"

He is so worthy of our love that if we are found indifferent or unloving the whole universe will echo our sentence, and our own hearts will feel and know that it is deserved. Not to love such a friend is a sin which, even we ourselves, never can forgive.

He will not ask you then what you did for His cause, what you gave for missions, what you said in His name, what you believe about His Word, but how much you loved Him.

It is a very awful fact that in the two last letters of Jesus from heaven to His church, the lack of love is marked with solemn emphasis as the ground for the rejection of two of these churches. The church of Ephesus had much orthodoxy, much work, much zeal, much patience, and He could say, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars . . . nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. . . Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." And the church in Laodicea, the last of the seven, had no other fault than this, that she was lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, and for that inexcusable offense He was about to reject her altogether.

Oh, beloved, ask God to search your heart to see how much of your Christian life and work has its root in real love to Jesus.

Long ago that saintly man, John Flavel, preached a sermon on this same text, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed," and was about to pronounce the benediction, when he suddenly paused, and with hands uplifted and with many tears, said, very solemnly, "How can I bless whom God hath cursed"; and then he added, "There is someone here on whom this curse must rest." There was one man in that congregation, a young man of twenty-five, who was deeply touched with this solemn warning, and he went away from the church and wandered around the world until at last he reached South America, where he spent many years and lived to be a very old man. One day, when one hundred years old, he stumbled into a chapel and heard a minister preach from the text in Isaiah, "The sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed." Suddenly the memory of the message of John Flavel rushed across his mind. It had been seventy-five years ago, but seemed like the voice from the judgment of Christ, and he trembled and broke completely down in anguish and despair. He sought the minister with scarcely a hope in his heart. It seemed like the knell of doom. He was just one hundred years old and the curse seemed sealed forever. But God let the light fall into the old man's heart, and he was saved and the curse was turned into a blessing.

Oh that today, even this parting word may save some soul from meeting it again in that last day as a lightning arrow of judgment and condemnation!

5

The New Commandment

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" Mark 12:31.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law" Rom. 13:10.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" Matt. 7:12.

"A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you" 1 John 2:8.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" John 13:34.

These various passages lead us on through a progression of truths of the most profound and practical importance.

I. The Old Testament Law of Love

In the book of Deuteronomy we have a number of commentaries on the moral law as given by Moses. During

the wanderings in the wilderness for forty years Moses again and again expounded the meaning of that great law and taught the children of Israel in many practical addresses the great principle of righteousness which God had summed up in those ten words which we call the Decalogue. And in some of these addresses we have a beautiful exposition of the great law of love to God and man. There is nothing in modern ethics comparable with the beautiful precepts of this ancient code, and our social and civil laws are put to shame by the large and generous provisions of the statutes of Deuteronomy. Let us look at a few examples:

“Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother” Deut. 22:1.

“And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again” Deut. 22:2.

“Thou shalt not see thy neighbor’s ass or ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again” Deut. 22:4.

What a beautiful illustration these words are of the law of love between neighbor and neighbor! Then in the sixth and seventh verses, what a touch of God’s tenderness even to the lower animals: “If a bird’s nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.”

It was not forbidden to capture the young birds if they were needed for any proper purpose, but in no case must they be left motherless.

Then verse eight is a good deal in advance of our building laws: "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence."

Again in chapter 23, verse 8, we have the original of the fugitive slave law. And verse 19 would revolutionize our civil laws: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury."

Again, in the last verses, 24 and 25, of chapter 23, we have a check upon the selfishness of the farmer: "When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn."

There is nothing more beautiful in the Bible than the provisions made for restoring pledges taken for debt. No pledge must be taken which was necessary to the life of the owner, such as his millstone; and if the pledge was necessary for the man's comfort at night it must be restored until the morning: "When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge; in any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God" (chapter 24:10-13).

Even the newly-married wife was protected by the tender and generous conditions of the ancient law of

love: "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home for one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (chapter 24:5).

Even the punishment of the wicked must be moderate: "Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee" (chapter 25:3).

Yes, the very cattle must be allowed to eat as they walk over the corn on the threshing floor: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (chapter 25:4).

After all that has been said about the cruelty of Judaism and its law, there are a good many things in the above statutes that our boasted American civilization might well copy.

II. Christ's New Edition of the Old Testament Law of Love

Our Lord has given us in His incomparable teachings a striking and beautiful epitome of this ancient law: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" Matt. 7:12.

The remarkable thing connected with this verse is the pointed and personal way in which it brings this law home to every man's heart and conscience and awakens in his breast a principle searching enough to compel him to the practice of this precept, even for his own self-interest. It carries with it the constant admonition that we ourselves will be treated as we treat others. There is a strange and solemn law running through the Word of God and His providence which we

find expressed in this tremendous sentence in the book of Ezekiel. "It shall be done to thee as thou hast done." And this golden rule which Jesus has given is based upon that principle, and it sends every man forth to act on the assumption, that he, by his treatment of his brother, is practically deciding his own destiny.

There is nothing touches a man so much as his own interest; that is, a natural man. Right and wrong, humanity and benevolence may seem small things when they affect another, but when they come home to our own life they grow strangely real. It was a small matter for Adonibezek, the cruel Canaanite chieftain, to cut off the toes and fingers of seventy kings, but when it came back to his own person, and he found his own toes and fingers dismembered, then he remembered, with strange vividness, the anguish of the men that he had tortured and recognized the just retribution of the law of love.

Now God would have us just change the direction of this a little and look forward to it rather than backward, and as we speak of a brother or act to a neighbor be ready to ask ourselves, "Am I prepared to receive the same treatment?" "Do I now conscientiously and willingly choose this very thing for myself?" Shall we henceforth act on this assumption and remember that we are content that God shall do for us the thing that we do for others? Oh! that our life may be filled with such blessing that the return of our actions shall bring only blessing to us. There is a strange mechanical toy, which, when you throw it into the air, describes an ellipse and comes back to you again. Beloved, we are throwing constantly just such influences from us. Let us walk through life remembering that our actions to others are on their way back to alight on our own heads, and as we act from this principle we shall be able, at least, to reach in some measure the spirit of justice if not of love.

Now this is not the highest plane; this is simply morality and legality, but it is a great way in advance of the Christianity of some people. Christ re-enacted this old law and it is binding upon us as the very lowest plane of Christian ethics.

III. *The New Testament Law of Love*

Jesus has given us a law of love quite distinct from this and as far beyond it as the heavens are above the earth. It is this: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another *as I have loved you*." The Old Testament is, "Love one another as you love yourself." The New Testament law is, "Love one another more than you love yourself, even as I loved you"; for Christ so loved us that He gave Himself for us; and the Apostle John has added: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

It was these two laws that John had in mind when he said: "I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning"; that is the Old Testament law of love. But then he adds again: "A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." Now this is the New Testament law of love which he expresses by saying that it is true in Him and in you. That is but another version of the saying, "*As I have loved you*."

Now, it is hardly necessary to say that on the very first view of the matter there is a radical and infinite difference between the Old Testament and the New. The teaching of Jesus Christ is way in advance of the teaching of Moses. Christ always recognized the teaching of Moses, confirmed it, re-enacted it, but He went much farther. Look, for example, at two cases:

Centuries ago a holy prophet, named Zechariah, was stoned to death between the temple and the altar by command of a king of Israel. Jesus Himself refers to it with severest condemnation of the crime and honors him as one of the first of the martyr prophets. But as he died, do you remember what he said? Looking up to heaven for vindication and vengeance, he cried, "The Lord look upon it and require it." And most terribly did God require it from his wicked murderers. But look at another scene. Another servant of God lies bleeding under a heap of stones at the hands of his murderers. It is the holy Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and as the blood oozes from his wounds and the life fades from his breath, what does he say? Looking up into the opening heaven he cries, with a face all lit up with the love of his Master, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." These two pictures, as with a flash of celestial light, reveal the true spirit of Judaism and Christianity. The one was justice, the other is love; the one was a true step in the revelation of God, but only a step; the other is the completion and consummation of the whole in the revelation of that love of which justice is but one of the foundation stones.

Look at the treatment of the enemies of the Israelites by Moses and Joshua; it was just, but it was terribly severe. But look at the last acts and words of Jesus Christ as He weeps over Jerusalem that was about to crucify Him, and with His last breath intercedes upon the cross for the men that were crucifying Him, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." This is the law of love which rises above Mount Sinai, even as the ascension glory is higher than the grandeur and terror of the Mount of Fire. Two things are involved in this New Testament law:

1. The very high standard. "As I have loved you." You are to love your neighbor with no less love than

that of God Himself. You are to think of him as God thinks of him, to treat him as God treats him, to love him as Christ loves him, nay, as Christ loves you, for He does not even leave it for you to judge how much Christ may love him, but just as you want Him to love you so you must love your neighbor. Now do not try to lower this standard. Do not say it is impracticable and impossible. Even if you never reach it, even if you feel that no man has reached it or can reach it, keep it: "Let God be true and every man a liar." There must be some way of fulfilling it or God never would have given it as His divine law. Let us keep the standard on its highest level and ask God to somehow let us reach it.

2. The law also implies in its very terms the sources and means through which we may fulfill it. The words, "As I," suggest the great secret. It is not only like Him but through Him and by Him that we shall be enabled to love. The Apostle John has hinted at this in the verse already quoted, "A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." Now it is true in Him first and thus in you. It is true in you because He is in you. In a word, Christ Himself must do the loving in us, and the secret of it is abiding in Him.

It is just the same secret of sanctification. It is the old story: the life of holiness is the life of love, and the secret of holiness is the indwelling life of Christ. We must come up to it and find our helplessness. Often we must go through the sad and humbling experience of trying ourselves, and then, bruised, baffled, ready to sink in despair, convicted in our conscience of the imperative necessity of love, and yet, convinced of our utter inability to give it, we fall helpless at His feet, and then He Himself comes and

breathes in us His own love, puts in us His own heart and enables us to love in Him and like Him, and to say with rejoicing hearts, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

IV. The Application of this Great Law to Our Various Relationships

1. Our love to the brethren. Our nearest human relationship is to the children of God. We are to love them as we cannot love the world—even as Christ loves them, with the peculiar love that others cannot share. "Love one another," is His command, "as I have loved you." There is a great mystery in the body of Christ; the Church which is separated, called and sanctified as His Bride, is, if fitly framed together, intimately connected with our life. We shall have to speak of this more fully elsewhere, but at present it is enough to say that our life and blessing greatly depend on our relationships one to the other, and it is, when fitly framed and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, the whole body which maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

You cannot have a strong, healthy and progressive Christian life unless you are rightly adjusted to your brethren and living in love to every one of them. This love is part of our common life. We love them instinctively because they are part of us and we of them. We do not love them because of their natural qualities nor because they are dear to us through relationship or kind offices toward us, but we love them because they are Christ's. "He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." "Whosoever shall give . . . a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple . . . shall in no

wise lose his reward." The principle of love here is, as already expressed, "That ye love one another as I have loved you."

It is not a natural affection, but a divine love, the heart of Christ going out from us to our brethren, the love of God reflected from us upon them. We do not love their persons, but we recognize the love of Christ in them; the Christ in us meets the Christ in them, and life touches life and God meets God. This will help us through the hard places in the life of love. Think how Jesus feels toward your brother, and then ask Him to give you His thought and feeling, and you will not find it hard to love. Think how Jesus feels to you and loves you. Think how you want Him to love you and then measure by this your love to your brother. How does Christ regard your faults? As you would have Him regard them, so regard your brother's. Jesus is not looking at you as you are in yourself, but He is looking at you robed in His grace, and thinking of you ever as you shall be when He has finished in you His glorious work and when you are like Him in the eternal future. So think of your brother, not in his present imperfection, but as he shall be after the finished work of divine grace. Anticipate the future, foredate the coming glory, rise to the heavenly realities, receive people as you will receive them in heaven, and faith and hope will become handmaids to love, and with the heart and eyes of Jesus you will look out on all around you, and earth will become heaven and the most uncongenial people will be altogether lovely.

2. Our friends and relatives. The same principle will apply to our love to those that are naturally dear to us and linked with us by the ties of peculiar affection or kindred bonds, where earthly loves must be transformed into heavenly fellowships. We have a symbol of this in the story of Isaac. Naturally he was very

dear to Abraham, spiritually doubly dear because God-given and God-linked. He was the channel through whom all Abraham's hopes and blessings were to come, and yet that natural love, and even that spiritual love had to be crucified and given back from the dead in resurrection life. So Isaac was offered up, the same as dead, and then when he came back to Abraham he was not the old Isaac any more, but a type of the resurrection, the child of a heavenly love and hope—God's Isaac rather than his, but doubly his because God's. And so all our friendships must be first surrendered and then received with the touch of heaven.

Therefore, the Apostle says in Ephesians, with respect to the tenderest of human bonds, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Do not love them merely with a natural affection, but let Christ put in you His own divine love and make your marriage a symbol of the eternal union with the Lord Himself. So again he says to fathers, "Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That is, treat them as the Lord treats you, love them as the Lord loves you, train them as the Lord trains you. And so, on the other hand, the children are to obey their parents as unto the Lord. So we find every human relationship is to touch and to receive a new light and life from its fellowship with the divine. Thus every earthly thing will become a sacrament and will speak to us of the divine and the eternal.

3. Our enemies. The highest kind of love is love to those that hurt us. The ethics of the world have never reached anything approachable to Christ's command, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, . . . and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"; and the pattern and motive of this is, For your Father in heaven "maketh his sun to rise on the

evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "Be ye therefore perfect," He adds with special reference to this, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

In the portraiture of love given us in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, it is very touching and beautiful to observe that the first and last touches in the picture are touches of sorrow. As the heavenly figure comes before us and begins her beautiful advance, she is suffering, "Love suffereth long." And after the long, sad way, as she passes out of sight to her crown, the tears are still in her eyes, the chastened sorrow is still upon her face, but illuminated with a light all beautiful and divine, and the last word that the recording angel speaks of her is, "Love endureth all things." She begins and ends her way with long-suffering patience.

Oh! when the heart is stung with a sense of wrong, injustice, misrepresentation and cruel hate, nothing but the very power of supernatural grace can enable us to love those who wrong us and bless those that hate us. We can only do it through the Christ in us. It is the same principle as "I have loved you." It is the spirit of Him who hung on the tree re-echoing in us His own cry, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." How could He love them? Well, He saw their side of it, He saw the sorrow that was coming to them, He saw them plunged in anguish and pursued with vengeance from which He could not save them, and He could only weep over them. And then He saw Himself crowned with glory, all the richer and the grander because of His present sorrows, and He would not keep back if He could a single blood-drop nor a single tear, but "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame."

If we will look at things that way we can love them too, "Even as He."

4. Love to the wicked and unworthy. I do not mean now those that do us wrong, but those who without personally affecting us yet are to us repulsive, uncongenial, nay, deservedly so; the impure, unjust, the selfish, the drunkard, the profligate, the heathen. How can we love these? On the same principle, "Even as He"; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And if the heart of God is in us we shall love the sinful, the vile, the unlovely.

That is the meaning of that strange affection which in many souls becomes a passion all-constraining and consuming—the love of souls. It was this that made Paul willing almost to sacrifice his own soul if he might save his countrymen. It was this that inspired the preaching of Whitfield and made Rutherford cry, "Your salvation would be ten salvations to me, your heaven ten heavens to me." It is this which sends the lady of culture and sensitiveness, with the very ecstasy of love, down into the slums and makes it, literally, a joy to throw her arms about her fallen sister covered with vermin and disease, and kiss her with the pure, fresh love that only a saintly soul can give, and, literally, love her to Christ. It is this which enables us to take hold of people that we do not even know and pray for them and reach out to grasp their very souls as with a mother's travailing love. How can we have it? Only as God Himself gives it to us and as Christ fully lives in us.

A young friend said to me once, "I do not seem to have a special call to speak to the unsaved. I find much more freedom in talking to Christians and teaching

them, and I wonder often if I am really to be a foreign missionary, or am mistaking my calling and should rather labor among the churches at home." I could only say, "Nay, sister, do not try to adapt yourself to your feeling, but bring your feeling up to His own example." He that was the most marvelous teacher of the disciples was the one that loved best to stand among the lost, and whose heart so yearned over them that they said of Him, "This man liveth in the wait for sinners." And again, "Then drew near all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him." If the Christ heart is full in us we shall be found with the Good Shepherd seeking the one that has gone astray until we find it. Let us be suspicious of our spiritual condition if we have not a fresh, tender love for souls. God is able to give it and to keep it.

5. Finally, this love will touch all the world and cover us with a mantle of universal charity. We shall walk among men representing God to them, thinking and feeling for them even as Jesus would.

The great principle is in these two little words, "As I."

Oh! what a sacred, solemn trust, that while He is representing us yonder, we may represent Him here, touching men for Him, and making them feel as we pass by as if God had for a moment touched their lives and heaven had opened its crystal portals and let one ray of its eternal light fall upon their dark path. Oh, this is our high honor, beloved, to go about the city a little while longer, to pass up and down the streets, to move through the home, and the store, and the church, representing God to men, thinking of them and feeling for them as He does, and recognizing it as our great trust to make them think of God by seeing us.

God wants everybody to have an eternal memory of something sweet and beautiful. He wants even the poor sinner to be without excuse about knowing the love of

God, and if he cannot see it in Jesus let him see it in you. Some day the memory of that little ray of light may bring him to the Saviour too.

And now, in conclusion, how shall we have God's love to people?

Beloved, there are two simple conditions: First, will you choose, instead of your own selfishness, your own willfulness, your own passion, your own vindication, your desire for revenge or satisfaction, will you let that little thing go and choose instead to love the people that you would rather not love, and to love them even as He loves you?

And second, will you choose to love all-round? You cannot have love in one or two directions and then hate in the others. If you have God, you must have the perfect circle. The sinner would like to have his sins forgiven, to be saved from drunkenness and self-destruction; but he does not want to give up some of the pleasant sins. But God does not want to have him on those terms; he must be wholly saved or not at all. Christ will not pardon one sin and leave another. If you are willing to have His complete forgiveness and cleansing and His full salvation, you can have it; but if you only want what pleases you you cannot have anything. And so it is with love. If you will have an all-round love, and enter into the heart of God without reserve, then you can have it, and Christ will take possession of that surrendered will and breathe in you His own affections, desires and nature, and you shall be in this world, "Even as He."

One in Him

“That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me . . . and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” John 17:21-23.

This is Christ's last prayer for His beloved disciples. It must be very dear to His heart. Its fulfillment was the glory of the Apostolic Church. The worst enemies of Christianity were compelled to concede the love of the early disciples, and they attributed the success of Christianity chiefly to this cause. The decline of Christian unity and the growth of sectarianism have marked the declension of true Christianity; and the glorious sign of deeper unity among the consecrated children of God are among the most hopeful signs today of the near approach of the Lord's return, and of the blessed time when we shall all be made perfect in one, and the world shall believe that Christ is the Sent One.

The two beautiful parables of the Treasure and the

Pearl are prophetic of the progress of the Church. The former represents believers in their individuality; the latter the Church in its unity. The Treasure is the many; the Pearl is the One. At present we are like the scattered treasure hid in the field; but the Lord is gathering us together, and soon the Body of Christ will be united in the glory of the Bride and will shine in the millennial age like a cluster of crystals and jewels, as John beheld the vision in his glorious Apocalypse.

There is an old legend that once in Eden there was a beautiful temple of jewels; it was the sanctuary where man met with God, and it was the symbol of the unity of His children with Himself. It was the paragon of Eden and of earth; its dome was a flashing diamond; its windows were rubies, emeralds, and amethysts; its floor was paved with gold; its doors were brilliants of surpassing beauty. But in the rupture that followed the fall of man, the temple was wrecked and scattered in fragments throughout the world so that pieces of it are now found in rocks and mountains and river-beds, in the precious jewels of the mind which men are gathering and wearing for their adornment. But the old legend tells us that the fragments are yet to be gathered together, and in the coming age the temple is to be built once more with a grander glory even than in the primeval morning of the world.

All this is true, anyhow, in the spiritual world. That temple of spiritual gems was once the sanctuary of the Church of God. Such a beautiful house of almost spotless purity and unbroken unity was the early Church in the upper room. But alas! the vision has been defaced, the temple has been riven into fragments, and the fragments are scattered now in every part of the Church of God. Christian life and character today are only seen in their fullness in individuals, and the picture of the complete unity of the Apostolic Church is nowhere to be found.

A hundred denominations based on human creeds and following human leaders divide up the army of the living God, and any single section is but a very narrow and partial expression of the glorious plan given to us in the New Testament. Some of us have tried to have an ideal church; we have prayed for it, we have suffered for it, we have labored for it, we have wept over it, and we have seen our brightest dreams blasted by the worldliness and selfishness of unsanctified men, and felt that all we could do was simply to gather individual fragments and to prepare the materials piece by piece and that by-and-by somewhere else we should see them framed together and a glorious temple arise in its millennial light and loveliness.

Yes, the temple will be rebuilt, the scattered jewels will be re-united, and brighter than ten thousand suns shall be the glory of the new Jerusalem when it shall descend from heaven, flashing in all the radiance of the ruby and the rainbow, and embodying all the glory of its Architect and Head.

But, as far as possible, let us realize the vision here. The Master did not mean it all for that coming age. Before He comes again it will be largely fulfilled in a real Body on earth; not perhaps in human organizations, but, at least, in a deep spiritual fellowship that will realize in some measure His glorious conception.

I. The Meaning of Christian Unity

1. We are one in Him, our Head, "That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

We are united to each other by being united to Him. We do not establish our relationship first with each other, but first with Him, and then through Him with one another. The little birdlings press close to the mother's

breast, and necessarily, therefore, close to each other. The spokes of the wheel fasten into the hub and touch each other there, because they all touch the center. The children of the family live together and look alike because they all come from one parental fountain of life and lie on one maternal breast.

Therefore, there can be no unity apart from Christ. We cannot love people by trying to love them. But if we both love Him, we shall love each other in consequence. Therefore, there can be no unity on the part of those who do not believe in Him. Organization will not make us one; common principles will not make us one. But if we are united to Him, then we cannot but touch each other.

In a foreign city three ministers of different languages met. They could not speak to each other except one word, but they looked into each other's eyes and they all pronounced together the one word, "Jesus," and their hands clasped and their tears flowed and they felt that they were one.

Not only do we derive our unity from Him, but He is the pattern of it. We are to be one even as the Father and the Son are one. The Divine Trinity is a pattern of the Church of God. It is a very solemn and tremendous thought. Just as the Godhead is one, so should we be. Think what an awful thing it would be for the Father and the Son for a moment to separate; think what a blasphemy it would be even to think of a disagreement or a difference there; and then think what an awful thing it must be for Christians to be divided. It is as important that they should be one as that God should be one. Will you remember, beloved, the next time the enemy seeks to rend you from the Body of Christ or to use you to rend the Body of Christ that you are to stand to your brother even as the Son to His Father?

2. We are one in a common life.

It is the oneness of nature. You might harness a tiger and a lamb together, but they would never work in unity. You might educate and train a hawk and a dove, but they never would be able to do anything but devour each other. They have not the same nature; you cannot make them coalesce. And so you cannot have unity between the natural heart and the regenerated spirit. What concord hath Christ with Belial; what fellowship hath he that believeth with an infidel? "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

The greatest hindrance to Christian unity in the Church is the number who belong to the Church and do not believe in Christ. They have not the same nature. It is like filling a cage with hawks and doves. So long as the Church is made up of unholy men and women who are living for their own pleasure and ambition, it will be a divided Church. It will be like Daniel's vision of the image, partly iron and partly clay, and it cannot stand.

3. We are one in the truth.

There must be, first, unity of life, and then, unity of truth. The divine order is not to draw up a creed and to adopt a platform of principles and then live up to them, but it is to receive a new birth and then believe the truth as a living experience. Unity of doctrine is very blessed if we have first unity of experience. The more complete our agreement of mind, the more intimate will be our unity of heart, if we have learned the true life to begin with.

We can all remember how delightful it was when first we saw Christ as our Saviour, to find someone else who believed as we did, and had the same experience. To meet a Christian in some far-off land among strangers thrilled all our heart with a delightful home feeling and a sense of oneness.

Some of us can remember later in our life when we

came to know Him as a Sanctifier, and the blessed truth that Jesus Christ can cleanse and keep the heart in perfect peace and purity became a personal experience. How lonely we felt even among Christians that did not believe this, and how well we remember the first time we met someone who felt as we did and believed as we did! How a second chord was added to our harmony and our whole being responded with a touch of deeper unity! It was an instrument of two strings now.

And then we came to know Him in a still deeper intimacy as our Healer. But none of our friends believed it. Even our consecrated friends thought we went too far, and we stood alone under the reproach of fanaticism. But when we heard a trembling voice repeating the same testimony, our whole heart thrilled with fellowship, and we recognized a nearer brother. There was a third chord in our instrument of many strings; there was a deeper harmony; there was a fuller chorus of love and oneness.

And then there came the crowning revelation of Jesus as our coming Lord. Beyond all the blessings of the present we saw the glorious hope of His appearing. We believed it as a doctrine and we accepted it as a personal hope. We came under its living experience, we rejoiced in it, and we felt it was ours. But we found but few that believed it. We longed for fellowship and sympathy. And as the years have gone by we have been picking out people that believe this truth and they seem nearer to us; they seem to be with us the members of an inner family circle preparing together for some glorious day when we shall stand in His likeness together and be welcomed at the Marriage of the Lamb.

It is a fourfold unity; it is a harmony without a discord. Thank God, it is the blessed platform on which many of us stand and in which we have a oneness that others cannot understand, in Christ our Saviour, Healer and Coming Lord.

4. We are one in the Holy Spirit.

“By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.”

It is only in so far as we are in the Spirit that we can be one. We cannot touch the human in people; we must feel for and find the Holy Ghost in others, and the Holy Ghost in us will meet the Spirit in them. Therefore, in times of great revival and profound spiritual blessing there is always much unity; the barriers of sectarianism are swept away, the grievances of years are healed, the heart of God's people swells and flows together and is enlarged, and the spirit of Apostolic Christianity is in some measure realized once more.

Walking along the beach you can see many little pools when the tide is out; each is a little ocean to itself, with perhaps a few little fish floating in their pond and feeling their importance. But when the tide comes in, all these little pools are flooded into one great ocean and the selfish little lake goes out to sea and finds itself lost in an infinite largeness of which it becomes a part, and all the little fish find themselves in fellowship with one another and become lost amid the greater creatures that they meet in the mighty ocean.

So when men build a church on mere human lines they go into sects and sections; they become absorbed in their own self-importance and they look askance at one another. But when the floods of the Holy Spirit sweep in, all this is changed; selfishness is melted away and every little ecclesiastical circle gets broadened into a larger fellowship, and men begin to see how small they are in the larger things which are opened to their vision. The great remedy, therefore, for sectarianism is the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the restoration of the power of primitive Christianity.

Not only does the Holy Ghost give the bond of

unity, but He also gives us the full enduement which completes the power of the Church and fits her for her work. It is not enough for the members to touch each other in perfect accord, but it is necessary also that the Church as a whole shall be equipped for her great work with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and that she shall present to the world a united front not only of harmony, but also of power and glory, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Therefore, the Holy Spirit has provided for the Church a great variety of ministries, operations and gifts, that she may stand equipped for her great calling in all the fullness of God's power.

The complete unity of the Church requires that all these gifts and graces should be in constant operation. They are like the robes of a fair woman or the features of her face—the absence of one destroys the unity of expression. The Apostolic Church was arrayed in all the glory of the Spirit and fully represented Christ to the world without a mutilated member or a lacking enduement. The modern church retains but a few fragments of this primeval array and stands with tattered garments and rent girdle, a spectacle of humiliation, oftentimes, before the world to which her Lord has sent her to represent not only His mercy, but also His Kingly power.

5. We are one in spiritual fellowship.

It is not enough that we have one life; it must be expressed in mutual love, communion, prayer and help. And, therefore, God has provided for the communion of saints. This is maintained not only by outward acts of worship and fellowship, but also by inward sympathies and mutual intercessions which could not be expressed in any outward form. Probably when we reach the perfect life we shall not need the medium of speech to express our thoughts and feelings, but heart to heart, even as we understand Him now, we shall meet in the intuitions

of the Spirit, and know, even as we are known. In a sense and measure, we may anticipate this here. There is a fellowship of heart and prayer which the Holy Ghost can give beyond all power of speech. God can lay upon us our brother's or our sister's need and enable us to stand with them before the throne when there is no outward communication whatever. Across wide oceans and vast continents heart can touch heart and meet before the throne, and we can bring blessings down upon the heads of those we never met.

God would have us so adjusted, so sensitive, so fitly framed together that we shall know His voice in this respect and always be able to catch the spirit of His prayer and respond to the faintest hint from the throne. Oh! how many a sorrow might be lightened, how many a life might be saved if we were ever obedient to the voice of the Spirit's prayer! He wants to have us like an Eolian harp that does not need the touch of fingers, but only the breath of God to bring out its harmonies. The Apostle Paul knew this and could say, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" And he has said to us in another place, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." There is a deep and real meaning in these words, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

Do we know this fellowship in the Spirit? Do we know these bowels and mercies? Not hooks of steel as human poetry has rudely expressed it, but cords of human heart strings and of divine sympathy—these are the bonds that bind us together.

*"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows,
The sympathizing tear."*

6. We are one in cooperation and service.

How much of the energy of the Church of God is wasted in divided efforts. Eighty thousand ministers of the gospel in the United States are doing what twenty thousand could do if they were but united, and each would only have six hundred members under his care—a very reasonable congregation. The other sixty thousand could be sent to the heathen world, and even then there would be only one to every two thousand of its population. The cause of this waste of energy is simply sectarianism. Each little and great body wants to be represented in every important center of population, and expense and efforts are put forth to have a church and a minister, and often it is a desperate struggle for existence for fifty or one hundred poor members to support the minister and keep up a separate organization. The machinery is not worth it. It costs the same expenditure of money on the part of these people that would reach thousands of heathens by combining their energies with the church already in operation at home, and all this surplus could be spared. To a man of the world it would really look as though a wise and infinite God was not directing the movement at all, and the truth is that in a great many cases it is not God's wisdom at all, but the selfishness and folly of men.

We do not believe in attempting at this late day any formal organization, uniting all the churches, although we believe that sectarianism is unauthorized by the Scriptures; but, without attempting to revolutionize the present system of things, there are many ways in which a wise cooperation, by interdenominational

methods, such as we have come to utilize in our missionary operations, would accomplish the most glorious results. Let us encourage such cooperation, and we shall always find the seal and blessing of God especially set on every movement that aims at the largest unity and rises most fully above narrow and selfish sectarian lines.

John Wesley's dream is not too old to remember. The good man, in a vision of the night, found himself entering the gates of heaven, and, wanting to find some acquaintance, he asked if there were any Methodists there. They told him there were none. Any Presbyterians, but there were none. And so he went around the whole circle, but these names were all unknown. And then he looked up in astonishment and asked who was there, and they said, "We have none but Christians here; the names you speak of belong to earth, but they are unknown in heaven."

Oh, that they were lost on earth too, in the glory of Jesus' name!

II. *The Symbols of Unity*

God has given us two symbols of the unity of His Church. One is the Building and the other is the Body.

The building is composed of various parts all so fitly framed together that they constitute a whole. There are foundations, arches, pillars, windows and various vessels. Some of them are very small and insignificant, and others very costly; but all are important, and the loss of a little brick or a single stone might endanger the whole structure. And so in the great house of God there are many parts. Some of them are as obscure as the concrete that lies beneath the foundation or the mortar that fills the spaces and cements the stones together or the filling in between the great masses of

stone; but the very least is important, and the cement is more important even than the stones.

The humblest member has a place, and the failure of a single member will often involve the suffering and loss of a great many. The keystone of an arch is necessary to keep the arch together; the loss of a single step on the front porch may lead to accident and even to death on the part of someone entering the house. The lost shingle in a roof will often ruin the whole ceiling by leakage.

And so in the Church of God you may be only a piece of flooring, you may be only a roof shingle, you may be only the front doorstep; but if you do not fulfill your place, or if you get detached from your next neighbor, you may cause the wreck of the whole building and the injury of many souls.

Still more exquisitely perfect is the figure of the human body. It consists of many members but the least of them is often the most important and receives the most abundant honor. There is an absolute necessity for their perfect harmony and adjustment in order to the health of the body. If the joint does not work in the socket the whole limb becomes diseased; and so, if you and your brother are not in harmony you hurt everybody that is within reach of you. The smallest irritation will sometimes cause the members serious inflammation; a little clot of blood will stop the action of the heart; the finest deposit upon the delicate structures of the body will prevent their free action and a scratch will often bring an abscess, and a little thorn if not removed may cause the amputation of the whole hand.

And so it is in the body of Christ. We have power to hurt one another by being hurt ourselves, and, if we would preserve the unity of the whole and the health of the whole, we must be sure that we act in perfect adjustment with those that stand next to us in every way. Not only is this true, but there is an intense sympathy

between the various members of the body. If one member suffers, all suffer; if one rejoices, all rejoice. If my little finger is hurt, my heart will ache with the pain and my brain will send a throb of sympathy to the suffering member; and so in the body of Christ, the hurt of each affects the whole and God would have us share in perfect sympathy one another's needs and sorrows.

We need each other for the lightest spiritual growth. The whole body is nourished by joints and pains and blood vessels. No part can stand alone, and so none of us is independent of our brother. Let us try to receive our life through one another; let us touch each other in whole oneness that He can minister through every part to the whole, and the beautiful figure of the apostle shall be true of both the body and the building.

"All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." "The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

I can learn from the humblest child of God; the youngest convert adds something to me; every Christian that is enriched can enrich me, and I cannot bless another without receiving as much again.

Oh, let us make the most of this blessed partnership for our own grace and His glory.

III. The Blessings and Benefits of Christian Unity

1. It is necessary to our highest spiritual growth "that they may be made perfect in one." Everything in nature and grace has a tendency to multiply. Put a little seed in the ground and it will grow with a dozen stalks and stems, and each will be stronger than if there were but a single stalk. A single coal will die out, but a hearth full of coals will brightly burn and each will

kindle the other. Fellowship is essential to our spiritual blessing and with all saints we learn to know the depth and height and length and breadth of the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

The isolated Christian is likely to be selfish and angular, and we need the touch of other lives to sweeten us, to broaden us, to polish us, and even the very trials that come to us from others are the greatest blessings in our spiritual culture, sharpening and polishing us even as diamonds are necessary to polish diamonds.

2. The unity of the Church is God's great means of impressing the world with the truth of Christianity. It is in the living fellowship of holy love that men see and feel the presence and power of God and are drawn to the Father's house. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," "that they may be one . . . and that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

IV. Some Practical Suggestions with a View to the Promotion of Christian Unity

1. Let it be our earnest endeavor—"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

This word endeavor means to strive with great earnestness, and to make it our intense desire and effort. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." If you resolve to do this under all circumstances, God will enable you. If you recognize it as being a sacred obligation as great as the Ten Commandments, you will not dare to break the law of love. If you feel that the Father and the Son might just as well be torn apart as our unity be severed with God's children, you will guard against it in every way. You will bind yourselves by the most solemn obligations which come from the cross of Christ to hold us from

breaking that hidden cord that binds us to the body, just as the mother is bound to her babe.

2. Let us recognize the fact that God expects us to live in harmony with all the people with whom He has associated us. He wants to make us equal to every situation, and He is able to. He wants us to feel that it is a discredit and dishonor for us even to fail in living in accord with all His children. There is no one in our life that God has not somehow allowed to come and He is able to carry us successfully in every relation so to be adjusted to people, that we will be able to live with them harmoniously, sweetly, to win their respect if not their love.

Someone once asked a conductor on an express train how it was that he could put up with so many annoyances and be so agreeable under all circumstances. And he said that if he could not get on on this train they would put him on the freight train. It is a good thing to remember that if we cannot get along in the delicate and difficult situations with which our Master entrusts us, He will have to put us in some easier place and withdraw some of the peace which He has given us. We can have an easy life if we want it, free from all annoyance, but we shall lose much from our character and our reward. If we want to be with agreeable people all the time, God can take us to heaven where there is nothing to offend, or He can put us on some lower plane where we shall have a life of freedom from these tests; but He loves us so well that He wants to discipline us and train us for the highest things and give us a richer crown. Every victory we win will bring us more in that day, and indeed much more today.

Beloved, do not ask God to excuse you from your hard place, but ask Him to fit you for it and make you more than conqueror through it.

3. Recognize not only God, but the adversary in

many of the things that come to you, and they will not be so hard to overcome. Do not see the people irritating you, but see back of them the adversary trying to trip you. Do not give him the chance to glory over you, and you will rise above people and circumstances and see only the spiritual cause back of you. Thus you will be able to overcome many trying things.

4. Do not try to love the evil in people or to be in unison with it, but simply ignore it and reckon it dead, as you do the evil in yourself, and feel your way to the divine in them, to the Holy Ghost in them, and love that even when you cannot love all that you see in them. Personally, when you find anything in yourself that tries you, you are glad to lay it over on Christ and refuse to recognize it any more but take Christ for it. Do the same with your brother, and it will be very strange if you cannot find enough of God in every human being to constitute a bond of unbroken fellowship, notwithstanding all their frailties and their failures.

5. Keep right with the one next to you. It is always the nearest link that affects us most, and it is the one that touches you the most closely that the enemy will often use to break your unity with others. Keep in close and perfect fellowship with all that touch your life.

6. Take the scriptural ways of settling your difficulties with people. Christ has prescribed a method by which we can keep everything right with one another, and if we will do just as He has told us we shall always be able to live in harmony and love. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." This is a divine command just as sacred as the sixth or eighth commandment. You must get right with man before you attempt to worship God, and even at the very altar of

Jehovah if you remember that there is a grievance upon your brother's heart, before you attempt to pray, go and get into full accord with him; get the grievance out. It may not be that you have wronged him, but even if he thinks you have, go as far as you can in meeting him in the spirit of love, and then come, and the Holy Ghost will pour down upon you the fullness of His blessing.

A very small thorn penetrating your flesh will soon cause a serious inflammation. You may try all you like to suppress the inflammation, but you cannot until you pull out the thorn. If you leave the rankling stub there it will fret and fester, and by the next day there will be an angry swelling, and before a week there may be mortification and possibly amputation, and even death. Do not try to get the inflammation out, get the thorn out; get right to the root of the thing; begin at the trifle where all the trouble started; recognize it; remove it. Meet in love, and then go on in the love and blessing of God.

7. Settle your troubles with people at the throne of grace. Talk to your Father about them in love and prayer, and you will find His Holy Spirit will love to come and smooth away the rough places and make your spirit sweet. And as you pray for them, you will find the strangest warmth possess your heart and the divinest love lift you above all the stings of selfishness and pain. You cannot pray for a person long without truly loving them. If you will only promise to pray every day of your life this simple prayer for any human being that you do not love, "Lord, bless her or Lord, bless him," with all thy heart in every way as much as it is possible for them to receive, you will find before a year that they will be your dearest friend, and you will find that, as the love is borne in your breast, there will spring in their hearts such a love to you as will make them incapable of doing you any wrong.

A very dear friend of mine had a bitter alienation come up in his life to two Christian friends who had greatly injured him. He was their pastor. For months his soul was given up to perfect hate, and he did not want to love them, but one night God bade him pray for them and as he prayed, in spite of himself, his soul became flooded with such a love as he had never felt for any human being before, and he just longed to meet them and take them by the hand. There was no explanation; it was just a baptism of the Holy Ghost. But the strangest and sweetest part of it was that when he returned to his home and stood in his pulpit for the first time after a long absence, those two men had the same baptism as he had had, and they were the first to rush forward to meet him and almost took him in their arms and told him how glad they were to see him.

The same spirit that came to Jacob at Peniel and then met Esau on the way with a spirit of reconciliation, and love is still able to touch our heart and prove the truth of that wonderful promise, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

8. Take a large view of the Church of God. Get beyond your immediate surroundings, your nearest friend or enemies, and learn to think of the whole kingdom of Christ as your trust to love and pray for. Regard yourself as the Bride of the Lamb and a representative of Christ for the whole world and think of yourself as trustee of every part of the kingdom of God, and so you will get to be interested in it all. You will be lifted out of your littleness; your soul will take on a majesty and a grandeur that others do not know, and your nobleness of purpose will prepare you for equal nobleness of service. There are most humble men and women in obscure places who are really bishops of the Church of God and can say as the great-hearted Wesley, "The world is my parish."

The truth is, if a man has a whole heart for Christ in him, he will be as big as the world in his sympathies. Christ is looking for great-hearted people. The world has plenty of intellect, but God wants something better; He wants expanded, boundless hearts in which He can dwell and from which He can bless the universe. God will give you as much as you are able to love.

Beloved, be very sure of this. The one test and condition of the highest service is the power of loving, and of loving under all circumstances with a love that loveth to the end and never faileth.

9. As the secret of all, keep filled with Christ; receive the Holy Ghost; be filled with the Spirit and let this be evermore your prayer:

*“Help me to love like thee;
Help me to love like thee;
By thy wonderful power,
By thy grace every hour,
Help me to love like thee.”*

The Divine Portrait of Love

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away” 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

We have often looked at these verses as a picture of the ideal Christ life. Let us look at them as a living portrait of Christ Himself. There is one Man who has lived this ideal out. There is one who has crystallized this divine conception into living thoughts, and words, and deeds. There is One of whom it can be said that this life is possible, practicable, and actual.

A man has succeeded in the great experiment of a heavenly life on earth, and what man has done once, man can do again. For after all, a holy life is just the

reproduction of Christ in human life. We need first to see this life in Him, and then to take Him to re-enact it in us. Shall we then behold the glorious portrait and read the verses in the living light of His example? "Jesus suffereth long and is kind; Jesus beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; Jesus never faileth."

This chapter contains three clusters of graces and qualities of love. There are eight negative qualities, three passive, and four positive qualities. Let us look at them in detail.

I. Negative Qualities

1. "Love envieth not." Need we say Christ envieth not? Envy is that quality of our fallen nature which looks with displeasure upon the happiness and prosperity of others and covets it for ourselves; and in contrast with it, love delights in the happiness of others and wishes them well, even if we ourselves are destitute of the things they enjoy, and even if they be our friends. Jesus was incapable of envy. Almost every one around Him had more earthly comfort and wealth than He. They had their friends and families. He was a stranger to His own country. They had their homes and possessions. He had nowhere to lay His head. They had their thrones and kingdoms, which He might have had if He wished, but He was despised and rejected of men, and yet He envied not the lot of any man.

The reason was that He had something better in His Father's love, in His own joy, and in His glorious, future destiny. He knew He had something better than all the world could give. Therefore, He was lifted above the possibility of envy. And so we shall find that faith will lift us into love. If we really believe in our inheritance and realize our high place and calling, we

shall envy no man's lot, but shall be able to rejoice in all the happiness that God can give to any of our fellow creatures and not for a moment wish to change places with a mortal.

Beloved, have you the faith and love that lift you above all envy and covetous desire? If you have the heart of Christ within you, you surely have.

2. "Love vaunteth not itself." Self vaunting is that weak and foolish passion in human beings which loves to make a display and have the admiration of others, loves to dress in splendid array, to make a good appearance, to be introduced in the most favorable aspect, to be spoken of highly, to be praised and exalted in the eyes of men, and to cover itself with earthly honor and glory. Thus the kings of ancient times came in royal pageantry and dazzled the superficial gaze of the world with their splendid pomp. But He came in lowly guise through the manger-bed and the obscurity of a despised mother and a disreputable Galilean town. He never sought to attract the attention of the world by display of any kind. He appeared among men as a lowly pilgrim. He walked through Galilee and Judea as a humble stranger.

He did not even use His extraordinary miracles to build up a splendid reputation. He would not use His supernatural power at the devil's bidding to dazzle the multitudes and win the honor and homage of men. Even when He came as a King to His throne in Jerusalem, He rode upon a little colt in lowly guise. Although the sun itself put on mourning at His death and the earth shuddered in sympathetic horror, yet He Himself died in ignominious lowliness on the criminal's cross and was buried in a stranger's grave. He had no funeral pomp, but even the poor women that came to anoint His body were too late to pay the honors they had wished, and it was not until He had left earth for heaven that the

glories and honors that belonged to His royal estate were paid Him by the angels of the ascension.

His whole earthly pathway was one of lowliness and simplicity. And so if the Christ heart is in us we shall be humble, too. We shall not want men to think of us highly. We shall wish to hide our names and faces on His breast, behind His cross, and in His work. We shall not bear great titles to our names. We shall not have flaring advertisements of our work. We shall not ask eulogiums from men. We shall stand with veiled face and bowed head and heavenly humility. We shall be found with Him kneeling at the disciples' feet, girded with towels, and washing the feet of the saints. And even if we have the wings of the seraphim, we shall use two of them to cover our faces and two of them to cover our feet, lest we or others should see ourselves or our service.

Beloved, have we the Christ love that vaunteth not itself and will not suffer others to vaunt us either, but feels a deep heart-piercing wound whenever any glory is given us that belongs only to Him?

3. "Love is not puffed up." How true this was of Him! This expression differs from the former as pride differs from vanity. Vanity wants others to admire us, while pride thinks highly of ourselves and cares little what others think. Many persons are very proud who really look extremely humble. True humility thinks rightly of ourselves. How did Christ think of Himself? Listen. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. . . . And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Listen again to Him. "The Son can do nothing of himself. The works I do are not mine, but the Father's

which sent me." His life was one of constant dependence upon God. He took the place of a helpless man and ever recognized His Father's authority and His Father's power in all He did and said.

At the same time we see in Him a beautiful simplicity. This was not self-degradation. He could think of His true place in the Father's love and His divine glory without self-exaltation. And so in truly humble hearts there is this simplicity. They can be either exalted or abased, and they are equally unconscious of self. In fact, humility is not to think meanly of yourself, but really not to think of yourself at all. And so we see in the lowliest spirits the greatest freedom even in speaking of their own work to others.

I remember hearing that eminent saint, George Muller, tell of his marvelous work of faith, and his own name occurred in nearly every sentence, but there was no self-consciousness of the man himself. So Jesus spoke constantly of Himself, but there was no consciousness of egotism in it. You feel in all He says that He is speaking just right.

Like a little child that can be the object of every eye or sit unnoticed amid its toys unconscious of itself, so true humility is so occupied with Christ and Christ's work that it is artless and lost to self altogether. And the child of God can feel that he is nothing in himself but a ransomed sinner and has nothing but what the grace of God has given, and yet he can sing with royal majesty, "I'm the child of a King."

4. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." Literally this means, discourteously, rudely.

How true this was of Christ! When was He ever harsh, rude or inconsiderate of others? The Christian is the highest gentleman, and Christ was ever refined, courteous, gentle and heavenly in His manners. There must have been an inexpressible charm about His

bearing, His look, His every act. The officers that came to arrest Him could not touch Him. They were spell-bound in His presence and by His words. When His enemies arrested Him, they had to do it under cover of the night and through the treachery of a friend.

He never was entangled in His words nor found in any rude or hasty expression. He was so gentle that the little children came to Him unbidden, and poor sinners felt at home in His blessed presence.

Was there ever a touch of gallantry so exquisite as the way He treated the poor woman whom they had dragged into His presence, caught by her enemies in the act of sin and brutally exposed by their cruel charges? But as they dragged her in before Him, He would not even look into her crimson face nor let her see that He heard their words; but bending down He wrote upon the ground as if He heard them not, and then He dropped into each of their hearts a little coal of fire in the form of a hard, searching question, and when they were convicted of their own conscience they all stole out of His presence. Then for the first time He rose and looked at her with beaming tenderness, only to say, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

When poor Peter found himself dunned for taxes and had not the money to pay, Jesus with thoughtful consideration noticed his embarrassment before Peter spoke of it and sent him down to the sea to catch a fish with a piece of gold in its mouth, and then said, "Take this and pay for me and thee." It was not for thee and me, but He put Himself first in the place of humiliation, and with gentle thoughtfulness relieved his embarrassed disciple from his distress.

Oh! if the heart of Christ is in us we shall be ever tender of the feelings of others. We shall never cut people. We shall never allow ourselves the hard look, the stiff manner and chilling grasp of the hand, the

tone that cuts like tempered steel, the phrases that insinuate more than they express and send gall to human hearts, but we shall have that manner of love which the Father hath bestowed upon us.

5. "Love seeketh not her own." Was there ever anything so true of Jesus as this? Was there ever life so utterly laid down, or spirit so supremely unselfish? He gave up His high and glorious place upon the throne and forever has become one with our redeemed race, clothed in creature form although the eternal Deity. His whole earthly life was the subordination of His will, and for one who has always ruled to be subject is indeed a strange and infinite self-renunciation.

His very purpose in coming to earth was to give Himself away and every act of His earthly life was a self-renunciation, until at last upon the cross it was consummated in a sacrifice so complete that even His enemies said of Him, "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

Even the very results of His redeeming work He has allowed others than Himself to reap. His own earthly ministry ended in a little company of about five hundred disciples; but to His apostles He gave on the day of Pentecost thousands of souls, and He has left all the fruit to be borne by the branches of the vine, while He Himself is like the hidden root beneath the ground. He has given to us not only His precious life but Himself, His Father's love, His very glory, and when the crowning day shall come He will concentrate upon His Bride the glories of the New Jerusalem, and He will shine forever reflected in us, His redeemed ones. And so, if we have in us the Christ, we also shall have a life of self-renunciation.

The meaning of self-denial is not an infliction of personal torment nor penance, but it is simply the giving up of the very principle of living for ourselves. It is

completely changing the direction of our being and will, so that no longer in any sense do we act with reference to how anything will affect us, but our one thought is how it will affect God or others. When we do this we are saved from self and from a thousand miseries besides.

Let me ask if nearly all your troubles have not arisen from this one fact, that you have thought of something concerning how it affected you. It was painful and irritating because it had unfavorably affected you, and yet it might have been a great blessing to somebody else and brought joy to them or, better still, to God Himself. If you had thought of this you would have been able to rejoice in it for His sake, and say as Ignatius when the lion was about to devour him, "God has made me bread for His elect, and if it be needful that the bread must be ground in the teeth of the lion to feed His children, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Beloved, it will work an infinite revolution in your life if from this moment you will act on the simple principle of considering everything no longer as it affects you, but as it affects Christ and others. You ought to have no business any more with yourself, but live entirely to God and live only for Him. This is not only holiness, but this is heaven.

6. "Love is not provoked." In the old version it reads, "Love is not easily provoked." This might be the right way to read it if we were talking about human love, but who would dare to say Jesus was not easily provoked. In the true original reading there is no "easily" and so we say, "Jesus was not provoked." Not once did He yield to the temptation to be angry. Often He might have been provoked, for He had cause to be provoked.

When He saw the wrong and injustice of men who sinned with impunity and trampled on every human right with contempt, He might have been provoked, but He

was not provoked. When He saw the hypocritical Pharisees binding on men's shoulders burdens impossible to be borne, and refusing to touch them with one of their fingers, He might have been provoked, but He was not. When the disciple that had walked by His side for three and a half years became His betrayer and with treacherous kiss turned Him over to His murderers, surely He might have been provoked, but, instead, He only met him with the tenderest reproach as though He would still save him from his wicked folly and crime, and said: "Friend, wherefore art thou come, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" When Peter, His bold and boastful disciple, turned against Him in the moment of His loneliness and trial and with oaths and curses denied that He ever knew Him, Jesus was not provoked, but He only thought of how He could save Peter from the remorse that was to hurl Judas into perdition. And oh! how He longed to meet his eye and give him one look of patient, forgiving, encouraging love and save him from his sin!

When they stripped Him in the judgment hall and beat Him in brutal cruelty and scorn, insulting His holy manhood in every conceivable and devilish way, not once was He provoked, but so majestic was His dignified patience and sweetness, that, as He stood, bleeding and pale before them, Pilate's hard heart was touched and he was compelled to point to Him and say: "Behold the man."

And so if the heart of Christ beats in our breast we will not be provoked. We will not, under any circumstances, feel ourselves at liberty to be vindictive, resentful, angry, violent nor overcome by passion, but will be kept like Him, in gentleness and quietness, feeling it a greater victory to be held in patience than able to prostrate our enemies by a word of omnipotent power.

He could have done this in an instant, and He did it for one instant to show them His power, but it was a greater victory for Him to bear it with sweetness and patience. This victory of love He fully won.

Dear friends, Christ can keep you still if you really want Him to and give Him the right, and then when the test comes, hand yourself over to Him and wholly consent with an honest purpose to be kept.

7. "Love thinketh no evil." This really means, maketh no account of the evil, does not lay it up in store for future revenge, but gladly and quickly forgets it.

How true this was of Christ! His every business was to forgive sin and forget it, and for centuries He has been engaged in little less than blotting out the records of sin from the books of God and the tablets of His own memory, and He began to do it while He lived.

We have already spoken of His gentleness and patience toward those that wronged Him, but more beautiful than all that we have said was His dying prayer for the men that crucified Him. Even the Old Testament prophets had said: "Lord, look upon it and require it." But His last prayer was: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; and all the years that followed, from the heavens where He ascended, He was just carrying out that loving prayer, leading one after another to receive His mercy.

The men that were saved on the day of Pentecost were the men that murdered Him. The very apostle that came nearest to His bosom for half a century, the glorious Paul, was one of His bitterest persecutors. And even yet His grace shines most conspicuously toward those that have most opposed Him and grieved Him.

The same spirit ever shines conspicuously in those in whom He dwells. A sanctified Christian cannot cherish grudges and keep grievances. We dare not lay up any

account against a brother even for a single night, or we cannot claim His full forgiveness for ourselves. The Christ love in our hearts will blot out every memory, and leave the tablets fresh and clean for nothing but records of love.

8. "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity." How easy it is for us to take pleasure in the sins of others if they have professed superior sanctity and condemned us! What a subtle satisfaction there is in thinking ourselves superior to someone else that has professed more than we, or in discovering a fault in a brother who has had some advantage of us!

The Lord Jesus took no pleasure in the sins of others, but was ever glad to recognize and forgive even His enemies and was anxious to bury every fault and every memory of a fault in the oblivion of His love. If the heart of Christ throbs in our breasts, our great business shall be to cover sin. We shall not be found exposing the faults of others, but healing and concealing them.

Early in my ministry I learned a precious lesson from an old Scotch minister. One of his people once came to him with a sad complaint against a brother Christian. After listening a while to him, he said, "Have you told anybody else?" The man said, "No." "Then," said he, "go home and never speak of it while you live. If God wants to bring a scandal upon His Church, let Him do it, but do not you be the one through whom the offence cometh."

Love covereth all sins, and the love of Christ in us will ever seek to cancel all the stains of that dark sad thing that only fiends delight in and only Satan loves to expose.

Brother, sister, do you ever take enough pleasure in another's fault to repeat it? As well might you carry the carrion, which is the raven's prey, and feed it to

your children. As well might you be the bearer of infection from the cholera hospital to the bosom of your family. It is filthy work and you may be quite sure that you would not speak of it or listen to it if you did not find some pleasure in it. The very fact that we can ever willingly touch it proves that we have not that love that rejoiceth not in iniquity.

If Christ is in your heart you will detest such things as you would some foul odor, some unclean infection, and you would fly from it and drive from your presence the man or woman that would bring to you the abominable things.

II. *Passive Qualities*

1. "Love suffereth long." One of the greatest attributes of love is to suffer. It requires more power to suffer than to do. And yet many a shallow and impulsive nature can suffer much, and for a time seem to rise above every pressure. But it is the suffering long that proves the heart. It is the prolonged pressure that wears out all else but heavenly love, the love that,

*"Bears and forbears, and will not tire,
Like Stephen's, an unquenched fire."*

Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end. Having chosen us, it is forevermore. When He took Peter He took him for better, for worse. When He took us it was with the purpose that nothing should ever separate us from His love. When He came to bear for us the cross, He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, and He rested not until His fiery baptism was accomplished and He had suffered all the will of God.

If we have the heart of Christ in us we shall suffer long. We shall let patience have its perfect work. We

shall stand in the fire and be found at last in our lot obedient even unto death, and we shall be strengthened unto all long suffering with joyfulness.

It is a good thing when trials have to be met for us to be prepared for the worst, and for us to go out assuming that the trial will be long, and then we shall be the better prepared for it.

In this sublime picture of love the first and the last word is about suffering. The picture of charity begins by suffering long and ends by enduring all things.

It is said that woman can suffer more than man. It is because she loves more than man. Beloved, have we the suffering love, and are we willing to have the long-suffering love that for Jesus' sake will accept the cross and the thorn and give back no retaliation, but only sweetness and love?

2. "Love beareth all things." This has reference to the trials that come from God. How true this was of the Son of Man! "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "Not my will, but thine be done." These were the expressions of His perfect submission to God. It was not blind submission, it was loving submission. It was the submission that believed that back of it was the Father's heart. And so the heart of Christ in us will bear all the Father's will.

There are two ways of bearing it. One is the way of stoical hardness and inevitable submission; the other is the way of willing acquiescence, trustful surrender and filial resignation. One is bowing to the stroke of the executioner, and the other is falling into the arms of the mother or yielding to the touch of the surgeon when you know it is to save your life. Christ had taken His Father's will because He knew it was best for others, and in the end would be best for Him, bringing a crown of glory that nothing else could win. And so, for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross.

God give to us the submission of love that springs from trust and sings amid the tears of sorrow:

*"Thy way, not mine, O Lord!
Though seen through many a tear,
Let not my star of faith
Grow dim or disappear.
Straight to my home above
I calmly travel on,
And sing in life or death,
'My Lord, thy will be done.'"*

3. "Love endureth all things." This has reference to the sufferings inflicted by men. How patiently Christ endured! How unremitting the trials and annoyances of His life! With His finely sensitive and perfect nature how out of harmony He must have been with everything around Him! How rude and strange this rough and sinful world must have seemed to His refined spirit, and how harsh and cruel the treatment He constantly received—born in a stable, butchered on a cross, and all His life between filled up with homelessness, insult, neglect, and everything uncongenial. Yet we never hear a complaint, we never find a touch of discontent, but see Him ever patient, happy, self-forgetting, and only thinking how He can please and help others. He poured out His life in constant unselfishness and self-denying service.

And so, if Christ lives in us we shall endure like Him. We shall expect to be tried by the people we meet. We shall not look for angels in our pathway. We shall take it for granted that we are to be tested in our patience, forbearance, gentleness on every side. We shall come out armed against the nettles and thorns with a panoply of love. We shall not wonder when we are stung and pierced, but we shall regard this as the very business of our life, and study how we can most sweetly meet

it, and in the most Christ-like way conquer it by kindness. We shall make no exceptions, but shall endure all things, and shall count it the proof of our Captain's confidence that He lets us have the thickest of the fight, and shall take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, shall count it all a joy when we fall into divers temptations, shall glory in tribulations, also, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

Beloved, this is a very high plane and nothing is equal to it but the heart of Christ Himself within you. But He was equal to it once, and He is able for it still.

III. *Positive Qualities*

1. "Love is kind." Kindness is that quality which aims to make people happy, and which dispenses goodness and blessing to all with whom it comes in contact. It shows itself in the genial smile, in the loving word, in the cordial pressure of the hand, in the courteous manner, in the obliging disposition, in the constant readiness to help and serve others. A truly kind person impresses you at once with his desire to communicate happiness to others. Christ so walked through the world that everybody He touched was the better for it. A child could not look at Him without getting a gleam of sunshine. A sufferer could not pass by without feeling that he had a friend. His biography was summed up in this little sentence: "He went about doing good."

We know a few such people. Is that your character, your life? Are you uniformly kind, approachable, genial, obliging, benevolent, considerate, helpful, sympathetic, willing to serve others and always making people happier for meeting you? This is one of the things that

shows itself in little touches—like the common sunshine of every day, so cheap that many despise it, but so dear and precious just because of its very homeliness. God give us the kindness of the Christ love!

2. "Love rejoiceth in the truth." Christ's love was very practical and broad; it aimed to build up the kingdom of the truth. It taught men the truth, and it saved them through it. And so, if we have Christ's love we shall be witnesses for the truth. We shall rejoice in the truth. We shall be found spreading the truth. We shall be helpers of the truth, and the strength of our life will be invested in extending the gospel of Christ and publishing the Word of God among the nations.

The highest exercise of Christian love is the evangelization of the world.

3. "Love believeth all things." This is really the secret of love; it is the flower that springs from the root of faith. It is when we fully trust God that we are able to love Him and everybody else, and it is as we trust others through Him that it is easy to love them.

The failure of love comes from the lack of confidence. When Abraham trusted God with all his heart, he could easily let go his inheritance to Lot, for he knew that Lot could not take it from him. His faith in God made him feel so secure that he was not afraid of anybody else. And so, if we have confidence in God, we shall not feel that people can hurt us, and all their treatment will be unable to even irritate us.

But there is something higher even than this. We not only believe God for ourselves, but we must believe God for others. We find the Apostle Paul saying of his friends, "I have confidence in God concerning you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you." He had not confidence in them, but he had confidence in God for them, and therefore he was not tried even by their temptations and apparent failures.

If we believe in God for people, we will trust them, and even when we cannot see our faith realized we will still trust and claim the blessing and treat them as if they were real. Oh, the rest and help that it will bring to you to claim the love that believeth all things! It was thus that Christ loved Peter, even when he denied Him, for His faith for Peter was looking beyond to a time when the erring apostle should be His boldest witness and with downward head should follow Him even to the cross.

Let us look at people in the light of faith as they shall be in heaven when all Christ's will for them is done, and our faith will work by love and surmount even their failures and provocations.

4. "Love hopeth all things." This was pre-eminently true of Christ. He was the most hopeful of all spirits. He looked not at the present, but unto the great and glorious beyond. On the Mount of Transfiguration, midway on His journey to the cross, He had caught the vision of the eternal future, and that cross was only a little speck between. But away beyond were the heights of the resurrection and ascension, the Gospel age and the millennial glory, and in the light of all that it was easy to bear the trials of the present.

"For the joy set before him (he) endured the cross"; yes, even despised the shame, and the glory of the future blotted out all that was dark and gloomy in the present. And His hope not only lifted Him, but it lifted all other lives into an infinite and eternal glory. He saw the future of His erring friends and even of His persecuting foes. He saw a time when those who were reviling Him should bless His name, when His love should have changed their enmity to devotion, and they should forever bless the name they were cursing then.

Oh! beloved, let us take the hopefulness of Christ, the faith of Christ, and the love of Christ and weave

them together into a tablet of glory and write upon it, "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

5. "Love never faileth." The glory of Christ's love was that it never failed. There was a flag once in this city that had never been taken by a foe. It had been through all the battles of the war of the Union and was torn with many a shot and shell, but it had never been surrendered. Oh, there is a glory in the prestige of perpetual victory!

Beloved, you may have the Christ so within you that you shall never fail. There is forever a blessing which God has for those that will take Christ for it and will let Him give it. Many a failure may come before you quite learn this secret; but it is possible, and it is for thee, for He is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

How shall all this be? Only as Christ Himself lives in us. This is not our love, but Christ's love, and that blessed Christ is offering Himself and His heart of love to all who will give up self forever and take Him in exchange.

8

The Antagonisms of Love

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” Romans 13:10.

We are to look at this time at the shadow side of love. God often has to show us the truth more vividly in the light of its opposite.

The ancient Spartans taught their children the beauty and value of temperance by making their Helots or slaves drunk before them, that they might see the grossness and degradation of drunkenness. And so God has placed along the shores of life His beacon lights to repel us from the dangerous shoals and sunken rocks. The faith of Abel shines out more clearly in the shadow of Cain's unbelief. The character of Abraham is heightened by contrast with Lot. The choice of Jacob is made more emphatic by the profane and worldly bargain of Esau. Joseph stands out from his brethren like a star in the darkness of the night. Caleb and Joshua appear more glorious because of the unbelieving spies who

accompanied them and defeated their testimony. Ruth's devotion is more beautiful in comparison with Orpah's inconsistency, and Mary's anointing receives a touch of glory from the picture of Judas' treachery. And so, the Word of God has given us not only a picture of love, but its antagonisms.

Indeed, a very large portion of our lives consists of the things that we do not do. The negative is the important element in human life and character. Just as your photograph is made from a negative, so your spiritual portrait has back of it a negative also. The Decalogue consists very largely of "thou shalt not." Only two of its precepts are positive; the rest are prohibitions. The portrait of love in the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians is more negative than positive. Out of the fifteen attributes of love, eight are things that love does not do. And so it has been playfully said, "The principal thing is to take the 'knots' out of our character, and there will be little left but love and righteousness." If we are willing to be kept from these, the Lord will give us the positive graces and qualities.

What are some of these antagonisms?

1. Self-love. This is the greatest hindrance to all true love. The very essence of love is self-forgetting and living for others, and the root of depravity is the love of self. It is the antichrist of the heart. It has dethroned God from His seat and become a god unto ourselves. Therefore, the first principle of the new life is love, and the first principle of love is self-renunciation. And so the Master has said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" John 12:25. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" Romans 14:7.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. . . .

For even Christ pleased not himself" Romans 14:1,3. The enemies that kept Israel out of the land of Canaan were the Anakim, the children of Arba and Anak, and these names mean self-will and self-seeking.

And so we are kept out of our inheritance by the various forms of selfishness. You will also find that when your love has failed at any point, your gentleness has been crushed or your unity broken, it is through something that has touched yourself and made you think of your interest and feel that something concerning you had suffered.

The only secret, therefore, of love is absolute self-sacrifice and complete death to the very "I" which has reigned as a rival of God and the controlling principles in your selfish heart.

2. Selfish love. Self-love is the love of ourselves; selfish love is the love of somebody else for the sake of the gratification it gives us. It is the same principle working out indirectly. And so our tenderest affections may become simply a channel for the development of selfishness. We love our children and our friends because they minister to our happiness and because of the pleasure it gives us to love them, and there may be no higher principle in it all than simply the gratification of an instinct, the same in kind, although higher in degree, that the mother bird has to her brood, or the tiger to her cubs.

This comparison is very humiliating, but the logic is inexorably true. And, therefore, every human affection is to be crucified and purified in order to become heavenly love. Christ has therefore said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" Matthew 10:37. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his

own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" Luke 14:26,27.

Of course, this does not mean absolute hate, but such a love to Christ that everything else will be as nothing in comparison, and that love would be turned to hate if our friends separated us from Him, and we would be willing to separate from them as if they were nothing to us rather than lose His love or approval. And, therefore, we find God putting the love of His people constantly through the fire. Abraham had to give up Isaac before Isaac could be given back to him forever in holy love.

There is an awful example of this in the 32nd chapter of Exodus, 29th verse. When Moses came down from the mount and found the people in idolatrous revelry, he called out for all who were on the Lord's side to stand up, and the sons of Levi stood up with sword in hand to vindicate the honor of Jehovah. Then Moses commanded them, "Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing." And those true men, for God's sake, had to lift their swords and destroy their very kindred that the plague of wickedness might be stayed and the honor of God avenged, and for this reason Levi was chosen for a perpetual priesthood, and his sons were honored as the ministers of Jehovah because they loved God supremely, even over their dearest friends.

Beloved, have you consecrated yourself upon your sons and your brothers? Have you given your dearest affections to God to be held in Him, for Him, and subordinate to His will in everything? I know two dear friends whose lives had been drawn together in the bonds of affection and unity and who seemed to be called to work together for the Lord as husband and

wife. But I remember so well when they came to me and said, "We are too fond of each other to come together now; the temptation would be too great to live for each other rather than for God." And so God, in His gentleness and love, separated them for a time and called them to stand in single-hearted fidelity to Him, and when that had been proved and tried by the waiting, He brought them together with a love that was not earth-born, but everlasting and divine, and their life has been one constant blessing and ministry for others.

Let no one misunderstand this. We do not mean that human affections are wrong, but they must be purified and crucified. They are like the soft shoot of the early spring which will stand no pressure; they must pass through the frost, and the next spring they are tough and hard and able to bear the fruit of the vine. The affections that are selfish are restless, absorbing, sensitive, constantly liable to be hurt and wounded by jealousy or agitated with passion. The love that is divine thinks not of its happiness nor rights, but only how it can be a blessing to others. There is a singular fact in natural history which, if true, is at least suggestive. It is said that the spider loves its mate so much that in a frenzy of passion it devours it. And so there are people who love only to devour the object of their love. They want your friendship because it pleases them, and your attentions because they minister selfish delight and gratify the human.

Beloved, just apply this test for a little to your heart and your life, and you will find much need for the love that seeketh not her own, and as a corollary, "is not provoked."

3. Hate, the opposite of love. It is only necessary to identify this dark and Satanic passion in the light of the holy Scriptures. "He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not

whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" 1 John 2:11. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" 1 John 3:14,15. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" Matt. 5:22.

4. Anger, wrath and malice. This trinity of evil is described in Colossians 3:8, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice." Anger is the uprising of ill-temper. Wrath is the violent overflowing of ill-temper in words and acts of abuse and fury. Malice is the holding on to the ill-temper, nursing and keeping the anger in sullen resentment and bitterness. They are all contrary to love and hateful to God. And so in the lofty epistle to the Ephesians, where the apostle is speaking to the men and women who are walking in the heavenly places in Christ, he finds it necessary to warn even them against this passion. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" 4:26. Never let your displeasure become extreme, and never let it last beyond the close of the day, but end every day in harmony and sweetness. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind to one another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" Eph. 4:31,32.

5. There is something meaner, baser and more Satanic even than this. It is envy, that crooked, creeping serpent that insinuates itself into the heart and looks with keen, malicious eye upon the happiness of others, and takes delight in wrecking the joys of innocence and prosperity which it cannot share. How the lightnings of

God's displeasure flash over it in that wonderful book of Proverbs, which is such an unapproachable picture of the human heart! "Envy (is) the rottenness of bones" 14:30. "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" 27:4. This is the natural condition of the human heart. And so we read in Titus 3:3, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." So we read again in 1 Peter 2:1, 2, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

6. Suspicion and evil surmising is one of Satan's brood of vices, classed with envy and strife in 1 Timothy 6:4. True love will not even harbor a thought of evil. "Charity thinketh no evil" 1 Cor. 13:5. In telling His Old Testament people the conditions of His blessing, God says to them in Zechariah 8:17, "Let none of you imagine evil in your heart against his neighbour." Our love must be pure even from imagination of evil.

7. Scorn is contrary to love. How terrible the irony with which God has said, "Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly" Prov. 3:34.

So closely connected is this with the spirit of strife that the same inspired book says again, "Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease" Prov. 22:10. We are to look down upon no human being, no matter how poor, illiterate, foolish, degraded or wicked; but we are to honor all men because they bear the image of God, and to see in every human being some touch of the divine and some lingering glory from above.

8. Evil speaking. When a physician asks you the

state of your health, he is very likely to ask you to let him see your tongue, and if it is coated and foul it is not hard to diagnose your disease.

Beloved, God wants to see your tongue. Love speaketh no evil of his neighbor.

The book of the New Testament which corresponds to Proverbs in the Old is the Epistle of James. We need no better commentary on this point than to quote a few of his sententious verses. James 1:26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

James 4:11, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgeth another?" This truth is not confined to people that are wholly sinful alone, but the worst of it is that it is the fault of those who love and worship God also, and so we read, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men. . . . Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. . . . Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

9. Evil hearing is as much forbidden by the law of love as evil speaking. The man who shall abide in God's tabernacle and dwell in His holy will is the man that "taketh not up a reproach against his neighbor"

Psalm 15:3. The man who shall "dwell on high" and "see the king in his beauty" and "the land that is very far off," is the man who "stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil" Isaiah 33:15. If you are walking in the law of love you will drive from your presence the man or woman that carried to you the putrid carrion of slander and calumny, and you would count it as gross an insult and injury as if someone were to bring into your house the contagious garments of one who had died of small-pox.

10. Unforgivingness is contrary to the law of love. In Matthew 28:21, our Saviour tells His disciples that they are to forgive until seventy times seven, and in the parable of the unmerciful servant, He teaches us that unforgivingness is an unpardonable sin and as fatal as unbelief to the soul. In Hebrews 12:14, we learn that a single root of bitterness may spring up and so trouble us that many will be defiled. And in Matthew 5:23, He commands us to immediately settle every personal grievance with an offended or an offending brother, and not to go to the altar of God with even the cloud of a mutual trouble or strife.

Once more in Matthew 28:15-17, He gives us a remedy for every misunderstanding and wrong, and if we would but walk accordingly we should be able to be in peace with all men. There may be persons with whom we cannot live in peace and whose churlish spirit will not receive our love, but this is such a remote possibility that the apostle says in Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

11. The spirit of judging is forbidden by the law of love. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you

again." And then with sarcasm it is added, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, . . . and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" Matt. 7:1-4. The Greek word for beam is rafter. It means a great log of timber, and the inference is that whenever you see a little mote or speck in your brother's eye, it is a sure sign that you have got a great, big rafter in your own eye. There is intense force and fire in the words of the apostle in Romans 14:4, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." And then with indignant recoil he adds, "Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." The surest way to get God to vindicate a man is for you to sit in judgment upon him.

12. Heavenly love is contrary to criticism and prejudice. Prejudice means prejudging, judging beforehand, judging from caprice, or rather dislike, than from a thorough knowledge of the facts. And so it is very clearly forbidden by the remarkable verse, 1 Corinthians 4:5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God." This is a very beautiful passage. There is a day coming when God will show everything in His true light, and with a loving purpose will show the good, and only the good. Some day we shall understand the things that now we judge so hastily and wish we could live our lives over again.

Oh! that we might be like Him who never judges hastily, who looks at both sides, and aims only to see the good and not the evil, and loves to hide a multitude of sins. But the keen critic's eye is always looking for the flaw in the marble or the fly in the ointment, and he generally gets such a rafter in his eye that he has no trouble in seeing it projected on the retina

of his vision from the piece of timber in his own eye.

Love delights to see the good and to praise where it can. How beautiful the spirit of the New Testament epistles! They always begin with commendation, and even in the Saviour's letters to the seven churches of Asia, He always speaks of the kind things first.

13. Giving offence is forbidden by this law. "It is impossible but that offences come," says the Master, "but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" Luke 17:1,2. "Give none offence, neither to Jews nor to the Gentile, nor to the church of God" 1 Cor. 10:32. This is the Spirit of Christ.

The word *offence* means cause of stumbling. We are not to be in slavish bondage to the foolish caprices of others, but we are to avoid every reasonable cause of harm to their spiritual life; and if in anything our acts weaken their faith or consecration, we are responsible up to the measure of our influence.

A poor blind man was once asked why he carried a lamp at night, when he could not see its rays. He said, "I carry it to keep the people from stumbling over me." So let us walk that no man shall receive anything from us but blessing, and the testimony of every human being, when we get to the Father's house, will be, "You were always a blessing and nothing but a blessing to me." Is it not a holy ambition worthy of every sacrifice?

14. Taking offence is as bad as giving offence. Undue sensitiveness is real selfishness. There is a Greek word used once by the apostle which has a very singular meaning. The verse reads thus: "That ye may be wise concerning that which is good: but simple concerning evil." The Greek word is "without horns."

Some people are all horns. They get caught in the brush every time they go through the thicket. Or, they are like certain fabrics which catch all the burrs on the roadside. If there is anything to irritate or annoy they are sure to catch it. Christ has said to such people, "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be offended." And there is a great promise for such souls in Psalm 119:165: "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

If you will but love God's law and have His great peace, nothing shall hurt you; and when you do get offended it is either because your heart is not single to God in obedience and entire consecration, or else you have lost His peace and joy. Isaac Watts wrote two lines once that should be written on all our phylacteries:

*"I'll not willingly offend
Nor easily be offended."*

15. Rudeness. Harshness of manner is contrary to love. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly, discourteously, harshly" 1 Cor. 13:5. A truly sanctified soul will always be considerate of the feelings of others and avoid the manners of the world which so deeply wound, by the studied tone, or gesture, or look of cold indifference, contempt, or scorn.

16. Falsehood and deceit are forbidden by the law of love. The Apostle Paul gives a very beautiful reason for truthfulness and frankness in Ephesians 4:25: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man the truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." It is the body of Christ that calls for our sincerity and true-heartedness, for when we sin against our brother we sin against ourselves.

17. Pride and vain-glory are contrary to love.

Romans 12:3-5, "Every man is not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." And then the reason for this is the same already given for truthfulness—our unity in Christ. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

The law of love will lead us to recognize our equality and to recognize every personal gift and grace as simply a bestowment of divine mercy, and to say, "What have we that we have not received? Who maketh us to differ?"

18. Respect of persons is forbidden by the law of love. James 2:1: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, with respect of persons." The love of Christ in us will recognize every one in his or her place and relative to Christ and entitled to our consideration. The mere circumstance of wealth, culture, or any earthly superiority, will not justify us in giving undue prominence to one above another; but the wisdom from above will be without partiality and without hypocrisy.

19. Lawsuits with God's children are forbidden by the law of love. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" I Corinthians 6:1,6,7.

The teaching of this passage is unmistakable. It does not forbid a Christian defending himself if attacked unjustly in the courts, but it does forbid our going to

law one with another before the world. And it teaches us that there should be a provision for Christian arbitration in all matters affecting God's people.

20. Severity to the erring is forbidden by divine love in 2 Corinthians 2:6-8. The apostle speaks of a case of one who had been severely disciplined by his church for his sin and warns them against the danger of undue severity and prolonged exclusion from the fellowship of Christians. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest, perhaps, such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you all that ye would confirm your love toward him." No matter how fallen and unworthy a man is, our love must be ready to help and save and guard him against anything that could cause him to sink or stumble in the way.

21. Love will show itself especially in avoiding everything that would discourage the weak. Romans 14:1, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." There are many Christians that cannot stand what others can, and true love will not be impatient with them and intolerant because of their foolishness; but will treat them as they should be and hear and help them. Many of us have to bear with a great many peculiar Christians. The church is full of spiritual cripples, cranks and imbeciles, but love will always bear with them with tender consideration, not making sport of their peculiarity, but finding out what is good and seeking to help and cherish them, and yet with a wholesome good sense that will in no way encourage their foibles and their follies.

22. Sectarianism is forbidden by Christian love. 1 Cor. 1:12, "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers

by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" 1 Cor. 3:5.

23. Controversy is forbidden by this law. "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" Titus 3:9; 2 Timothy 2:24,25.

24. Fear is opposed to love. 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

25. Disobedience is inconsistent with divine love. "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." John 14:24.

These are some of the antagonisms of love in its two-fold aspect to God and to one another. Many of them are but little things, but these are the things that mar the picture and defile the spotless purity of Christian character. Satan has no objections to your sanctification; he is quite willing that you should put on the white robe and the marriage robe. All he wants is to put a little stain upon it, a single spot, for he knows that this will defile and destroy the whole. The bride's fair garment does not need to be rent and torn, it is enough that a single speck show upon its whiteness and it is useless. The moth does not eat the whole robe, but only perforates it with tiny holes, and the costly fur and the valuable fabric is ruined forever.

Dear friends, what Christ wants is the love that never faileth, and He is able to give it. Let us only see the places where the danger comes and be guarded against them, and choose to stand, and He will give us

the grace to stand, and put in us His own love, and bind us to His throne with love's unbroken chain.

He does not ask us to make the love and produce the grace; He only asks us to avoid the snares and the hindrances, and to say "No" to the temptations of the adversary. If we will do this, He will do the rest, and that glorious picture shall be fulfilled in which love is represented as a perfect girdle that passes all around our person and binds all the other garments together in the beauty of holiness and the adorning of the heavenly bride.

Phases and Features of Love

We have looked at the reverse side of the shield; now let us look at its face, all golden and glorious in the light of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures. We have looked at love as one bright, divine, and living face impersonated in Jesus Christ. Let us look at it now in its particular features and minute details as the New Testament portrays them in many an inspired picture.

1. Let us look at our *love to Christ* as it shines in the life and testimony of the warmest heart that ever throbbed with the love of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:13, "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God. . . . For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Here we behold the love of Christ as not only a heavenly passion, but an enthusiasm so intense that

men may almost call it madness. "We are sober enough," the apostle says, "when we look at you, but when we look at Jesus, we are beside ourselves." And like a great torrent whose waters cannot be held back, our love sweeps over all banks and barriers and constrains us to live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

This was the glory of Paul's character and this will make any life sublime: the passion fire of love, following the passion sign of the cross.

2. The Church of God is a family circle related in Christ and beloved for His sake. *Love to the brethren*, therefore, is one of the first instincts of the new life and one of the tests of our growth and spiritual healthfulness. We have many pictures of it in the New Testament. Paul writes to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4:9,10, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more."

Romans 12 is a sort of companion picture of 1 Corinthians 13. There the apostle unfolds first the great doctrine of our unity in Christ as members one of another, and then He applies it to our practical Christian relations in the 10th verse: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." This is more than cold, conventional charity or ecclesiastical courtesy; this is a great deal more than the ceremonious fellowships of our church life. It is the warm grasp of the hand, the radiant smile, the loving sympathy, the tender home bond which binds the household together as one family in Him. It is a kind and affectionate love. It is the constant habit of thinking of your brother before yourself, and gladly honoring and recognizing him in his work even more than yourself.

The same picture is repeated in Ephesians 4:1-4. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

This is our right attitude to all the children of God, not only in our own little sect and circle of acquaintances, but in the whole family of Christ because they belong to Christ.

3. There is a broader love than the love of the heavenly household, and therefore we find the Apostle Peter in his portrait of a perfect Christian life bidding us to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and then to all these the two crowning qualities of holy character, brotherly kindness and charity.

Brotherly kindness is our love to our brethren in Christ. Charity is our larger *love to the whole world*. Both of these are necessary to a perfect character. Without these, even godliness would give our spirit only one dimension, pointing upward to the sky like some great, branchless tree. God wants us rounded, developed and filled up with all the human sights that come to us through contact with men and are deepened and developed by our intercourse with our fellows.

Hence, men that have the largest contact with men are usually the largest men. A man who spends all his life in a study, a school, or a prayer-meeting will be an angular, narrow ecclesiastic, or a devotee as stiff as the starch in his shirt collar. The man who touches men on every side will be a rounded, symmetrical man. Hence, business men are more liberal, more mellow, and as a rule, more practical than the ministers.

God wants to give us as many fillings as we will take; therefore He does not at once take us to heaven when we are saved, but He puts us into the school of life; and amid the varieties of people with whom we come in contact, He is shaping us, polishing us, and preparing us for the highest manhood and the broadest usefulness.

Now love is our equipment for all these situations. We are to meet all our brethren with brotherly kindness, and we are to meet all the people of the world with charity, a charity that never fails, but that adjusts us to every relationship and situation with a heavenly sweetness and fitness that will commend Christ in everything we do.

4. Love comes into the innermost circles of human life, *love in the family*, and sanctifies, sweetens, and elevates every human affection. Therefore in the epistles to the early Christians, husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved the Church. Wives are to respond with subjection even as unto Christ, and to love not only the good and gentle, but also the unkind and froward. Parents are to bring up their children, not in the impulses of selfish affection, but in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children are to love and honor their parents as they do the Lord, and even servants are to forget their earthly relationships and do their work as unto Christ.

And so heavenly love hallows the home, and shines in holy luster within the sanctuary of the heart and hearth.

5. And if we go to the opposite extreme from love to hate, from the home circle to the ranks of hostile foes, love still goes with us and teaches us to *love our enemies*, to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, to bless them that curse us; and if our enemy hunger, to feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him drink, and in so doing to heap coals of fire on his head. Matt. 5:43,44; Rom. 12:20.

6. The highest form of *love is patience*, long-suffering and love toward those that only cause us pain. And so the very text of meekness for the inheritance of the saints in light is given us in Colossians 1:11, "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

This is not only longsuffering, but longsuffering with joyfulness. This is a love that not only endures, but surmounts the pressure and soars amid the cloudless sunshine of heaven triumphant, even above hate and pain because of the joy unspeakable that cancels every sorrow and disarms every dart.

7. Let us look at the complete picture of love's enrobing. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness," or rather the perfect girdle. Colossians 3:12-14. Here is the entire dress of the sanctified Christian. Beginning inside with our very life, we are to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind. Then we are to wear all the outer garments of gentleness, patience, forbearance, and when the robes are all complete we are to put around us, as the girdle that will hold them all together, that love which is a perfect girdle passing all around and leaving no place open or exposed, but covering in every part, and compacting all our dress so that we are prepared for every situation and victor under every circumstance.

8. Let us look for a moment at *love as it manifests*

itself in Christian fellowship. It binds the hearts of saints together in blessed oneness. Therefore the apostle says in Philippians 2:1, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, of the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." How beautiful is his own picture of his fellowship with his friends in Philippi! Phil. 1:7, "I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

Again, let us look at the tenderness of his love as he expresses it in 1 Thessalonians 2:8, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." This is no mere human friendship. This is the love that touches God before it touches any man or woman, and only touches them in God and is bound to them by His divine and perfect love. But it is very real, blessed, and unspeakably helpful, comforting, strengthening, inspiring the heart in the service of God, and giving evermore a heavenly foretaste of the fellowship above.

9. We have some lovely pictures of *love as it relates to partnership in service.* How suggestive are the words of Paul to the Philippians, Phil. 4:3, "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."

How charming the picture of Aquila and Priscilla (Romans 16), of whom Paul says, "My helps in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the

churches of the Gentiles"! How his directions about Phebe speak to us in this selfish age: "Receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and . . . assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also"! How beautiful the picture of Timotheus (Philippians 2:20), "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." How beautiful the story of the apostle whose love sought out the lonely apostle in Rome and risked his own life that he might minister to Paul (Philippians 2:26, 27 and 30).

10. *Sympathy* is one of the forms that love will ever take. In the body of Christ, one member suffers with another and feels the common pain. And so the apostle tells us to "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." He says of himself, 2 Corinthians 11:29, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" He counts it his glory (Colossians 1:24), to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ . . . for his body's sake, which is the church."

To share with the Master and His disciples their sufferings and pains in proportion to our love, we will suffer for those we love; and in the Holy Ghost we shall often have their every need laid upon us both in soul and body that we may help them. Love gladly welcomes such burdens and glories in such pains.

11. *Liberality and benevolence* will always keep pace with love. What charming pictures we have of the Apostolic Church in this regard! Paul came saying of them (2 Corinthians 8:3,7,9). "To their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves." First, giving their ownselves to the

Lord, and then their means. "Therefore," he adds, speaking to us, "as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. . . . For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

12. Our love will show itself in *the spirit and ministry of prayer*. How very beautiful the testimony we receive of Paul in his prayers for his friends in Christ. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" Phil. 1:3-5.

Again, he says in Colossians 2:1,2, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." In another chapter he speaks of Epaphras, "who is one of you, a servant of Christ, . . . always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" Col. 4:12.

And so to the Ephesians he writes, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" Ephesians 6:18,19. There is no mightier help that we can give a Christian friend than prayer. There is no tenderer bond of remembrance and love than prayer. There is no meeting place more sacred, and no communion more real than that we find beneath the mercy seat.

Are we true to this ministry of love? Do we pray for one another as faithfully as the apostle did? Is our prayer list as large and wide as our list of friends? Have we that Christ-like love that touches and helps those who, perhaps, have none to help them but us? May God give to us a more unselfish, indiscriminating, world-wide, and mighty ministry of prayer!

13. *Christian courtesy and consideration to others* will always be found one of the many manifestations of Christian love. The apostle, in 1 Peter 3:8, drops two little words that may be among the minutiae of Christian love, but they are fraught with much significance for the happiness or pain of others. "Be pitiful, be courteous."

And the Apostle Paul has left us a beautiful commentary of these words in his letter to Philemon. The occasion of this little epistle of courtesy was the conversion of Onesimus, a former slave of Philemon. While in Rome, whither he had fled from his master, he became acquainted with Paul. Paul found him a most profitable helper and would gladly have kept him, but was far too honorable and polite to do so without Philemon's consent, so he wrote this beautiful letter and sent it back to Colosse, commending the restored slave to the master's forgiveness and love; and asking for his sake that Philemon would receive him in the spirit of love. The whole letter is full of exquisite touches of tact and sanctified politeness.

He reminds him very gently of the right he might have claimed to enjoin him to do this thing, and he sweetly adds: "For love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ." He then hints how gladly he would have kept Onesimus, but gives Philemon the chance to bestow kindness on him of his own free will.

He then ventures to ask him to receive Onesimus

not as a slave, but with brotherly love, and he says that if the servant had defrauded him of anything, he, Paul, would gladly make it up. Like a wise master of hearts he does not plead too strongly, but assumes with tactful confidence that his friend will do much more than he asks; and then, with the very highest tact, he gently hints that he himself is coming very soon to visit Philemon and leaves an impression that would make it exceedingly difficult for his friend to deny his request and yet meet him in his own home without embarrassment. It is indeed a masterful letter and a pattern of the very highest Christian tact.

The more truly Christ dwells in us, the more refined will every sensibility be, and the more impossible for us to hurt another's feelings if we can avoid it. At the same time, there is, of course, a limit to even kindness. There are people that compel us to be guarded for our own self-respect and for their good; and so the New Testament has taught us how to deal with idle, imposing, and unworthy persons, such as are ever found like waifs stranded on the shore of every Christian movement. We are not compelled to pay a premium to indolence and dependence.

The apostle tells us in 2 Thessalonians 3:14, to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Yet we are not to count such an one as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother. And again, in the Second Epistle of John, we read of persons who are not worthy of our fullest confidence, and to whom we cannot bid Godspeed or we shall be partakers of their evil deeds. But this must all be done with love and tenderness.

There is a most beautiful passage in the epistle to the Colossians (3:16), which sets our rebukes to music, and bids us to admonish one another, if we have to do it, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

There is no duty so difficult as that of speaking plainly to the erring, and no place where Christian love can so display its finer qualities and its freedom from the coarseness, harshness, and rudeness of the natural heart. God give us the tenderness, compassion, and courtesy of Christ!

14. We have some fine examples of an affectionate ministry in the New Testament. It is possible to teach and preach the gospel with all truthfulness, and yet without love. Our great power is in *speaking the truth in love*. The ministry that will accomplish most is that which beseeches man "in Christ's stead, (to) be reconciled to God." How very beautiful is this spirit in St. Paul! Could anything be tenderer than this: 1 Thess. 2:7,11, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." "We exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children."

15. It is especially in *our ministry for the lost* that the love of Christ must constrain us if we would have power. We need not preach to sinners unless we do it tenderly. As the Apostle Paul spoke of the enemies of the cross of Christ and their awful end he did it "even weeping." And in writing to the Roman Christians about his own countrymen, the Jews, he rises to a height of passionate tenderness which has never been approached except by the Spirit of the Master in Moses and Jeremiah in the days of old. How many of us are able to understand and feel the meaning of these words, Romans 10:1. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved," and of the still more unapproachable words, Romans 9:1-3, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my

kinsmen according to the flesh." Such a man must draw souls to Christ, for he binds around them his very heart-strings, and draws them by the cords of love.

Such then are some of the phases of Christian love. It is a great thing to see them and see our failures in them and the victories grace and virtue which we may take from Him and transfer to our own life and character.

A few years ago there were many people interested in a simple and popular form of art, known as transferring pictures, and commonly called Decalcomanie. These pictures were not drawn by the artist, but were obtained ready made, and by a delicate touch had simply to be cut out of the tissue paper and transferred to the article to be ornamented. Being pressed down with a hot iron, they adhered to the surface and really became a part of the piece of furniture or beautiful page to be adorned. So in our spiritual life, God gives us His transfer pictures in His great treasury of grace, and we have just to set them in our life where we are inadequate and unequal to the pressure, and the Holy Ghost will burn them in.

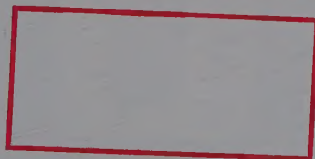
There are three steps we must take in realizing this experience of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and His grace. First, we must choose the love of Christ, and let Him see that we mean it. Second, we must take it by simple faith from Him, as something not in us, but in Him for us. Third, when the real situation comes in life, we must let Him work it into us, and we must not flinch under the temptation or seeming failure, but stand true to the position we have taken, and He will graciously and wholly accomplish His work in us and bring us into the realization of all that we have claimed.

And so you shall "add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness

charity"; and thus our Christian character will grow into symmetrical fullness, and we shall reach, at length, the fullness of the stature of Christ Jesus and that life divine whose essence is love.

And so may He make you to "abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, . . . to the end that he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

DATE DUE

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